



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





Wednesday, 14 June 2006

OC11928





CLARA STANLEY ;

OR,

A Summer among the Hills.

BALLANTYNE, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.



laid supplied the place of a riding skirt, and Clara was
the pony. "

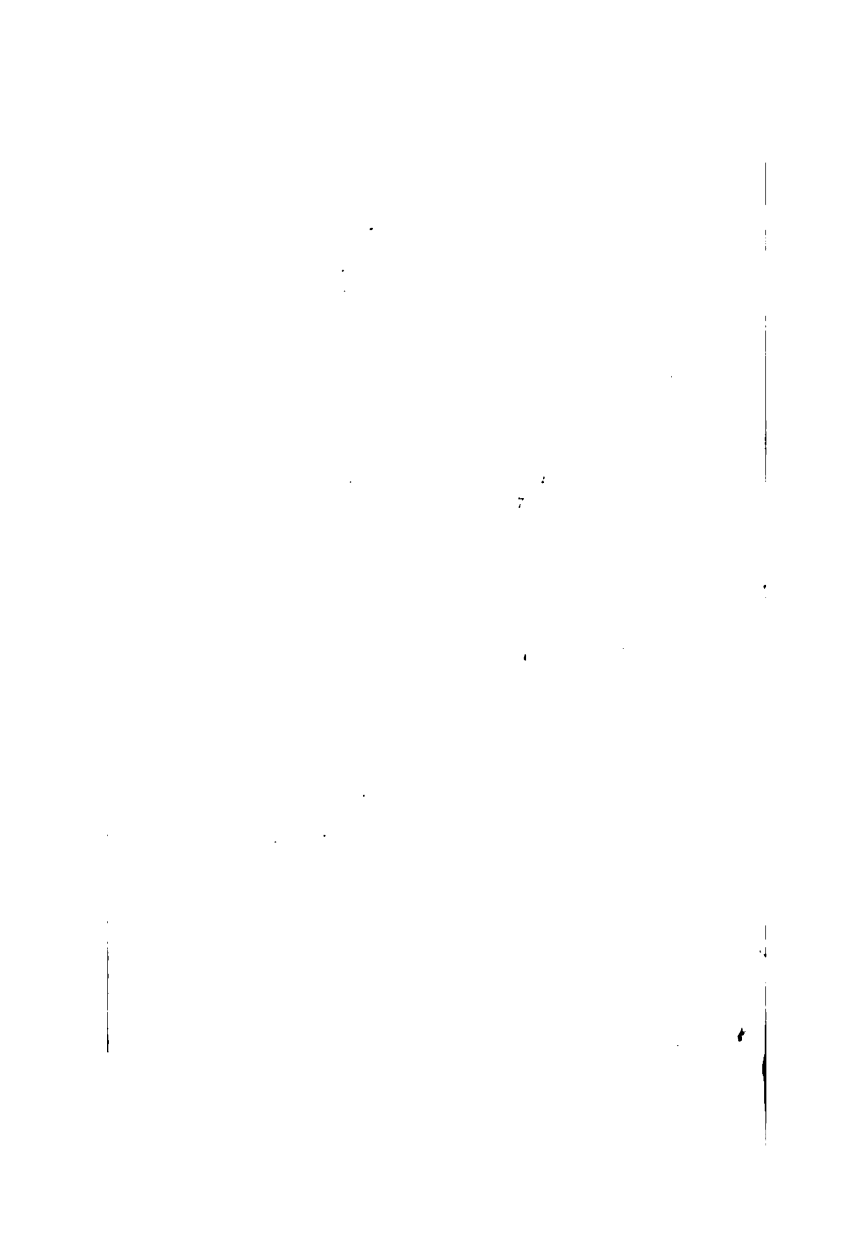


21 AND CO. BIPNERS STREET





JAMES NISBET AND CO. 21 BERNERS STREET.



CLARA STANLEY;

OR,

A Summer among the Hills.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"AUNT EDITH."

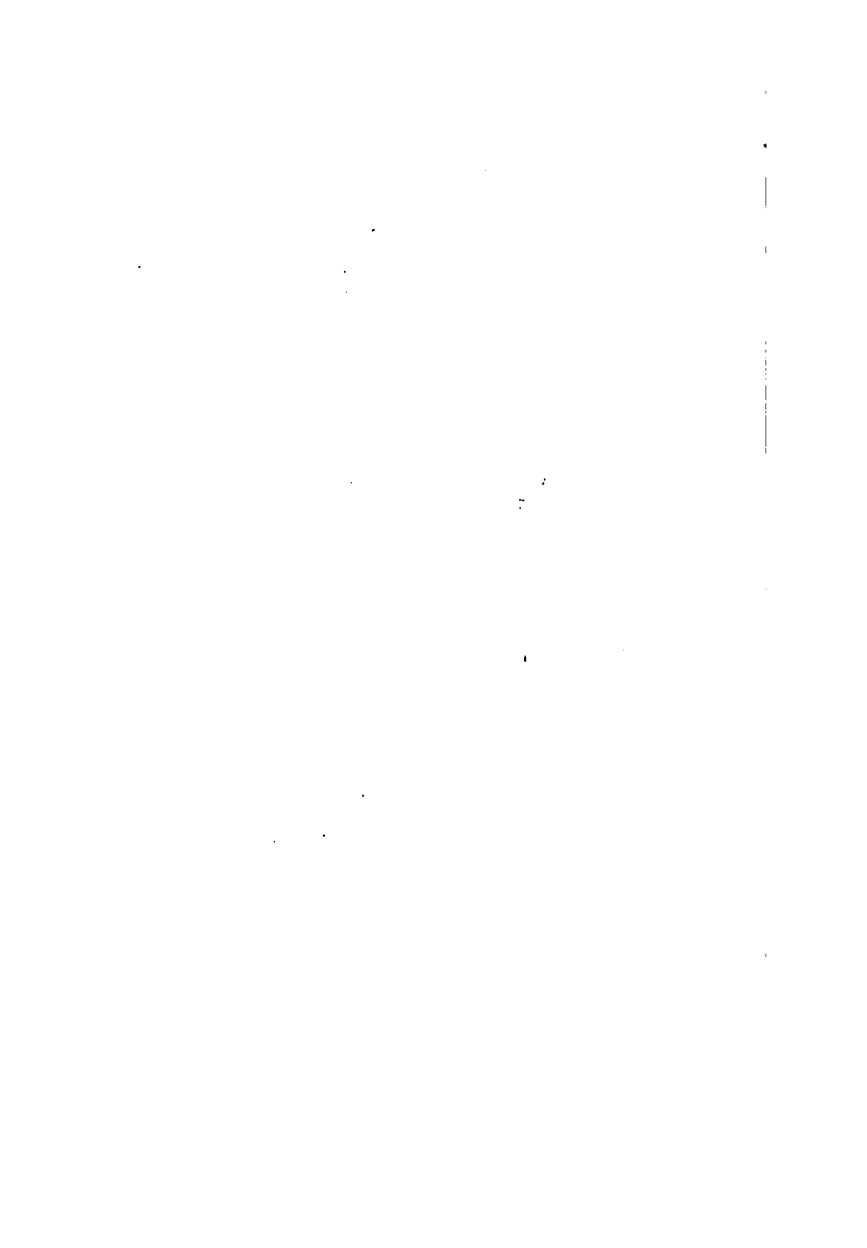
Shel.

LONDON :

JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLIII.

24a. t. 708



CLARA STANLEY;

OR,

A Summer among the Hills.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"AUNT EDITH."

Shel.

LONDON :

JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLIII.

242.6.708

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
IN WHICH OUR STORY BEGINS,	1
CHAPTER II.	
A HOLIDAY RAMBLE,	19
CHAPTER III.	
THE JOURNEY NORTH,	40
CHAPTER IV.	
A DISAPPOINTMENT LEADS TO OTHER THINGS,	63

	PAGE
CHAPTER V.	
LESSONS AND OTHER MATTERS,	83
CHAPTER VI.	
THE LOVE OF TEASING, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES,	105
CHAPTER VII.	
A WALK ACROSS THE MOOR,	133
CHAPTER VIII.	
A NEW RELATION,	157
CHAPTER IX.	
CONSCIENCE REPROVES FAITHFULLY, AND IS NOT LISTENED TO,	186
CHAPTER X.	
DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE, AND HOW WE SHOULD FEEL TOWARDS THEM,	217

CONTENTS. **vii**

PAGE

CHAPTER XI.

A TEMPORARY ELEVATION IS SUCCEEDED BY A	
SUDDEN FALL,	248

CHAPTER XII.

AN EXPEDITION TERMINATES IN AN UNEXPECTED	
MANNER,	292

CHAPTER XIII.

A LESSON FOR THE LIVING,	325
---	------------

CHAPTER XIV.

A VISITOR MAKES HIS APPEARANCE,	344
--	------------

CHAPTER XV.

OUR STORY ENDS,	365
----------------------------------	------------

CLARA STANLEY.



CLARA STANLEY.

CHAPTER I.

It was an evening in spring, between eight and nine o'clock, and in a pleasant room, something between a drawing-room and library, sat a little girl. The wind was howling mournfully in the branches of the tall trees near the house; the shrubs that were close to the window dashed their branches against the panes of glass, and heavy showers occasionally startled the little girl; but within, all was pleasant and comfortable. The bright light of the fire shone warmly upon the red window-curtains and oak book-cases, and cast long flickering shadows upon the walls. There

was a lamp on the table, but it was not lighted; nor was it required, for the inmate of the room had laid aside her book, and was engaged in fondling and talking to a large dog which lay on the hearth-rug.

The door opened, and an elderly person appeared. "Miss Clara," she said, "it is time that you were getting ready for bed. It is past nine o'clock, and if your papa had been coming to-night, he would have been here an hour and a half ago. It is a pity for you to sit up. I daresay your papa will come to-morrow."

"But I think he will come to-night," said Clara; "for papa always keeps his word; and when he says he will come, he does come. And don't you remember, nurse," she continued, "that, once before, papa was very late, and you persuaded me to go to bed, and he did come after all? so, if you please, I shall sit up to-night, for I have a good deal to say to him, and he has been nearly a fortnight away."

While nurse was endeavouring to persuade her rather wilful charge to go to bed, the dog, who had stretched himself

full length on the hearth-rug, suddenly started up, and, brushing past Clara, in his haste nearly overturning her, rushed into the hall. A joyful bark announced some welcome arrival, and Clara, wild with happiness, found that it was her papa. After a joyous welcome, she assisted him to take off his greatcoat and plaid, for his hands were benumbed with cold ; and Mr Stanley and his little girl went into the library.

“ Why, Clara,” said her papa, “ you have determined that I should not feel cold ; you have made a perfect bonfire.”

“ I wished very much to make you comfortable, papa,” said Clara. “ I was quite sure that you would come to-night ; so, after the housemaid had mended the fire, I put on some logs of wood. I got them myself, but I did not think there would be such a blaze.”

“ Now,” said Mr Stanley, “ I suppose nurse has gone to send in some tea. If it is not too late, you may sit up with me for a little ; I have something to tell you. On second thoughts,” continued Mr Stanley, looking at the clock on the chimney-

piece, "I think you had better go to bed; it is late, and I daresay you are tired; we can have some conversation to-morrow at breakfast."

"Dear papa," said Clara, "do let me sit up to-night. I have not seen you for a fortnight, and I have been thinking it such a long time. If you send me to bed, I am sure I shall not sleep. I shall always be thinking of the something you have to tell me."

"Well, Clara," said her papa, "you may sit up for a short time; and you can tell nurse that I have allowed you to do so."

Clara ran to tell nurse that she had her papa's permission to remain with him for a short time; and, when she returned to the library, she found that a servant was carrying in tea. When everything was arranged, and the door again closed, Clara sat down at the tea-table, and said, "Now, papa, may I pour out your tea? I shall not put in so much sugar as I do sometimes. You shall sit at the end of the table, next the fire, and I shall be your

little servant to-night, and get everything for you. There are some mutton chops coming, for nurse said she thought you would be hungry, so I told cook to have some ready for you, and I wonder what makes her so long of sending them up."

"Have patience, Clara," said her papa; "I have not been many minutes at home; and here your mutton chops are," continued Mr Stanley, as the door was opened.

Clara had by this time poured out her papa's tea, and getting off her chair, was most assiduous in putting everything eatable on which she could lay her hands close to his plate, till he was surrounded by bread, toast, biscuits, chops, salt, and preserves.

"Stop, Clara," said her papa, "your kindness is quite overpowering. I have scarcely room to move my arms. I wish you would sit still for a few minutes, and not make such a bustle in the room."

"But I am so glad to see you, my own dear papa, that I do not know what to do. I can scarcely sit still, but I will try."

For a short time Clara remained quiet,

... had had some tea, he
... arm-chair by the fire, and
... at his feet. After a
... indifferent matters, Mr
... and how do the lessons

... countenance fell.
... said her papa, "that is a
... you could look up in my
... I have been trying to learn
... I have been trying to be
... an afraid nurse will not
... for me."

... said Clara. "Oh,
... passing into tears,
... that I do not
... to please
... in care
... better.
... in this
... time

... I
... nurse.
... year-
... does not

make steady efforts to get the better of idle habits, cannot have much love for her papa. However, Clara," continued Mr Stanley, "I have for some time blamed myself for part of what is most faulty in your character. I know that, by keeping you at home with me, I have deprived you of some advantages. I am not able to have you constantly with me, neither can I train you in some things as you ought to be trained; and, therefore, I feel that I have in some measure been the cause of your getting into idle and careless habits."

"No, dear papa," said Clara, "it is not your fault, and it is not nurse's fault either, for you have often spoken to me, and she speaks a great deal to me every day; and I always think that I shall begin to try very much, and then I forget. May I tell you, papa, what nurse is so much vexed about?"

"Yes, you may, Clara," said her papa.

"You know, papa," said Clara, "that nurse taught me to knit a long time ago; but I could not be troubled finishing anything, and nurse was always telling me that she thought the world was turned up-

side down now ; for that young ladies long ago sewed a great deal, and made such lots of stockings, and all sorts of things, and now they scarcely took a needle in their hands."

" Nurse is not far wrong there," said Mr Stanley ; " but what has this to do with your bad conduct ?"

" Just this, papa," said Clara ; " nurse persuaded me to begin a pair of stockings for you, and I thought it would be such a nice thing to give you a pair of stockings of my own working ; so we got some wool, and nurse began one for me. She cast on the stitches, and I was to work for an hour every afternoon with her when I came home from school. But I never thought it would take such a long time to knit stockings—the first one is only down to the heel. I began more than a month ago, and I was so tired of knitting every day, that yesterday I begged nurse to let me off just for once, but she would not ; and it was such a beautiful day. So, when she went downstairs at five o'clock to tea, I ran out with Nero to the garden. I only intended to

stay for five minutes, and go in again to work ; but I forgot the knitting, and nurse, and everybody, till Sarah came out to the garden to tell me that tea was ready."

" Oh, Clara, Clara !" said her papa, shaking his head.

" That is not all," continued Clara. " When I went into the house, there was nurse standing with such a dismal face, and the stocking in her hand. The worsted was all entangled, and two of the needles were out ; and then I remembered that when I was running out of the room, my foot caught the worsted, and I was in such a hurry, that I only stopped to take it off my foot, and did not pick up the ball. And then nurse was so grave, and she said that she gave me up—that it was useless to try to teach me—that I was so idle—and she said that she would speak to you, and see what you would say about it. Am I terribly bad, papa ?"

" I can scarcely say terribly bad," said her papa ; " but still, Clara, I cannot conceal from you that your carelessness and dislike to anything like steady occupation

are serious faults. If you are ever to acquire habits of persevering industry, it must be now; and nurse is quite right to endeavour to teach you to finish whatever you begin. Perhaps I might say a good deal more to you on this subject, but I hope that you will soon be with those who will take pains to teach you persevering diligence, as well as many other things."

"What do you mean, papa?" said Clara, bursting into tears; "are you going to send me away altogether to school? Oh! don't send me away, papa; don't send me away! I will be industrious. I will sew, and knit, and do everything that nurse tells me, if you will only let me stay with you. Oh, 'papa! I love you so much; don't send me away!'"

"Hush! dearest Clara," said her papa; "I am not going to send you to school; don't weep; listen to me, I have something to tell you."

"But are you going to send me away at all?" sobbed the child.

"We will not talk of that just now," said Mr Stanley; "I am going to tell you

of something that happened to me in London—something that made me very glad.”

Clara dried her tears, and prepared to listen. “About a week ago,” said her papa, “I was passing along Oxford Street in London, when I saw a gentleman dressed in black coming towards me. Perhaps I might have passed him, for you know that your papa is a little short-sighted. Very fortunately, the gentleman was not short-sighted; so he stopped, and spoke to me. I found that he was a very dear friend, and we were very glad to see each other so unexpectedly, for I had thought that he was in the Highlands of Scotland, and he had thought that I was in Yorkshire. I shall tell you how we came to be such good friends. Long ago, when I was a boy,” continued Mr Stanley, “I lived with an aunt in Edinburgh, and went to college.”

“I was about sixteen, and this friend of mine, Mr Melville, was three or four years older. He was very good, and kind, and clever; and, when he saw me inclined to be idle, he used to persuade me to work hard.

He often talked to me about God and Jesus Christ, and about my soul; and, although I did not listen so much then as I should have done, yet I never quite forgot what he said, and I always loved him very much. He became a clergyman, and when I was a few years older, I spent a whole summer with him in his beautiful manse in Scotland; and a very happy summer it was. Mr Melville is a great deal older now, as well as your papa; and he has a wife and a great many children."

"How many?" said Clara.

"Let me see," continued her papa; "why, I think there must be five. Mr Melville and I had a long conversation when we met in London. Mr Melville told me a great deal about his children, and I told him a great deal about you, Clara, and he has promised to spend a day or two with us on his way back to Scotland; so I hope you will be glad to see him."

"Yes, papa," said Clara; "but you have something more to tell me?"

"Yes, I have," said Mr Stanley. "I saw

Mr Melville again yesterday evening, and he and Mrs Melville have been so very kind as to ask you to spend some months with them in Scotland. I accepted the invitation for you most thankfully, for I feel, Clara, that with them you will receive the training which you require most."

"I wish you had not accepted their invitation, papa," said Clara, "unless you are coming too. Did they ask you?"

"No," said Mr Stanley, smiling—"at least not to remain for some months. Now, Clara," continued her papa, "you must not be foolish about this. Mrs Melville is a very nice person, and you will like her better when I tell you that she was a great friend of your mamma. Mr Melville you will soon see yourself; and the children of such parents must, I should think, be pleasant and amiable; so I hope you will spend a happy and profitable summer at Inverallan Manse.

"Now you must go to bed, but before you go, bring me the large Bible from the side-table: we shall read a Psalm together."

Clara knew, from her papa's tone of

voice, that it was useless to ask him for permission to remain up longer, or to urge anything against the visit to Scotland; so she very wisely dried her tears, and bringing the Bible, sat down beside her papa, and at his request read the 121st Psalm.

“ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved :
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper ;
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil ;
He shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out,
And thy coming in,
From this time forth,
And even for evermore.”

Mr Stanley then prayed with his little girl, and, commending her to God's protection, bade her good-night.

When Clara went up-stairs, she found

nurse in a state of great distress at the lateness of the hour.

"What has kept you so long, Miss Clara?" she said; "it is nearly eleven o'clock, and how am I to get you up in time in the morning?"

"Papa let me sit up," said Clara, shortly.

"You have been teasing your papa to let you sit up," said Mrs Ford, for so was nurse called. "I really must speak to my master about that and some other things. But what is the matter with you? you have been crying; has anything happened to vex you?"

"Never mind," said Clara, "I shall tell you some other time; I am going to bed now."

When Clara was undressed, and laid in bed, nurse took away the candle, and left her alone. The first thing that Clara did was to take a fit of weeping. Although spring had more than set in, the evenings were occasionally stormy, and as the wind moaned in the chimney, and sighed around the house, Clara forgot all the sunny fore-

noons she had already enjoyed. Life appeared to her one perpetual winter; and at the thoughts of her visit to Scotland her tears flowed afresh, and her sobs came with redoubled violence. Afraid that nurse would hear her, she buried her face under the bed-clothes, and remained there until worn out with weeping. She again emerged, with her face swollen and feverish, and began to take a calmer view of matters.

It occurred to her that, although her papa was not to pay a visit to Scotland with her, yet that he might come and see her; she might write to him; and, after all, it was not so bad as going to school; there could not be so many lessons nor so much strictness. Besides, she remembered that she would have companions; and she began to wonder if Mrs Melville, who had known her mamma, were at all like the dear mamma whose image in Clara's mind was only a dim memory. These considerations, with that love of novelty so strong in the minds of the young, soon made Clara's prospects brighten, and she dried her tears. Before sleep quite overpowered her, she

had begun to form plans for the future; and when at last she slept, it was to dream of the journey to Scotland.

Clara was Mr Stanley's only child. Her mother died when she was four years old, and from that time to the period at which our story commences, Clara had been constantly with her father at their pleasant home in Yorkshire. She was too young at the time her mother died, to remember much about her; and although accustomed almost daily to talk to nurse of the dear mamma on whose portrait she looked so often, she had little idea of the loss she had sustained. For three or four years her papa had been her only instructor. When away from him, she was under the care of Mrs Ford, who had been her mamma's maid before her marriage, and had gone with her to her new home. Mrs Ford, or nurse, as she was generally called, was deeply attached to the child, and earnestly desirous to see her do what was right; but her ideas as to the mode of training were occasionally a little faulty; and Clara was a child whose disposition

required peculiar management. She was ten years old, and for the last year and a-half had attended as a day pupil, a school in the village near which her father's house was. There were no other day pupils than herself; the others were boarders who came from a distance. Clara did not profit there, as she might have done; for although she was by no means a stupid child, she was exceedingly heedless; with so little care for the morrow, that it never gave her any concern at all, and therefore the lessons were often entirely neglected. Grievous were the complaints made to Mr Stanley by Clara's teachers, and by nurse, who had in vain attempted to teach her to sew. He had long been uncertain what plan to pursue with regard to his child, when Mr Melville's invitation for the time relieved him, and he resolved to send Clara to Scotland, trusting for after guidance and direction with regard to her, knowing that in the meantime she would be in safe hands.

CHAPTER II.

NEXT morning, as Mr Stanley was sitting in his study, he was startled by a loud noise above him, as of a heavy body dragged along the floor. Recollecting that the room above was a lumber-room, he conjectured that a servant might be moving some furniture. The noise, however, continued, and as it disturbed his studies, Mr Stanley was going to ring the bell, when some one tapped at the door, and nurse entered with a face that seemed to tell of no common misfortune. "What is all this noise up-stairs, nurse?" said Mr Stanley. "I wish you would tell the housemaid not to move anything in the room above when I am in my study."

"If you please, sir," said Mrs Ford,

"it's Miss Clara; she has been working among the old imperials and trunks for the last half hour, and she will not leave them alone."

"Send Clara to me, nurse," said Mr Stanley; "tell her to come down-stairs immediately, just as she is."

In about five minutes, Clara appeared at the study door, which she seemed very unwilling to enter. "Come in, Clara," said Mr Stanley; "you have not yet wished me good-morning. Come nearer, my little girl; I can scarcely see you." Clara was very unwilling to approach the study table; for her hair was hanging untidily on her neck, her frock had been torn, and hastily pinned up, and her hands were very dusty. Her papa looked at her for a moment, and then said, "What have you been about this morning, Clara?"

"Papa," said Clara, "I was looking for a trunk in the lumber-room. I thought I would require a trunk if I went to Scotland, and I remembered that I had seen a nice large one up-stairs, so I went to look for it as soon as I was dressed."

"But how have you made yourself so dirty and untidy?" said Mr Stanley; "I cannot shake hands with you."

"The things in the lumber-room are quite dusty, papa," said Clara, "and I had to lift down so many bundles. You remember the old red curtains that were in the dining-room before we got new curtains? Well, they were on the top of the trunks, and they were all covered with dust. There were a great many other things besides, and I had to lift them down, for nurse would not come to help me, and that is the reason my hands are so dirty."

"And your frock, Clara?"

"My frock," said Clara, looking down, and reddening; "I tore it on a nail that was sticking out of an old box; it is very stupid that people will leave nails sticking out in boxes."

"Now, tell me frankly, Clara," said her papa, "have you been doing right this morning?"

"No, papa," said Clara, "I know I should not have been in the lumber-room,

for nurse has often told me not to go. I am sorry I have made myself so dirty that you cannot shake hands with me."

"Well, then, my dear little girl," said Mr Stanley, "go up-stairs, and make yourself tidy as speedily as possible, and then come down to me, for it is nearly prayer time. After breakfast, you and I shall walk to the village. I shall take you to school to-day, for I wish to let Mrs Hill know that you are soon to leave her."

After breakfast, Mr Stanley and his little daughter set out to walk to the village. As no servant accompanied Clara this morning, her papa carried part of her books for her. Their way lay along a quiet country road, bordered by tall thorn hedges. These were now clothed with the pale green of their early foliage. On the banks, beneath the hedges, were clumps of primroses, and, hidden beneath their green leaves, beautiful white and purple scented violets. The fields were carpeted with rich grass, and above was the beautiful sky, of a deep

blue, partly covered with masses of white clouds.

"Papa," said Clara, after they had walked along for a minute or two, "I did not think to-day would be so fine, it was so stormy last night. Do you know, papa," continued she, "that I do not feel so unhappy to-day about going to Scotland as I did last night?"

"So I suppose," said Mr Stanley, "from the circumstance that you were so busy this morning in getting a trunk ready for your journey."

"But still I am sorry," said Clara; "will you miss me very much, papa? will you feel lonely without me?"

"I shall miss you very much, Clara," said her papa; "but it is for your own good that I let you go; and I really hope that you will be obedient to Mr and Mrs Melville, and that you will try to give them as little trouble as possible. I confess I am sadly afraid that they will find you troublesome. I do not think that you are often guilty of intentional disobedience; but you do what comes pretty much to

the same purpose, you forget what is said to you, and you are excessively careless. What sort of woman do you think you will be, should you live to grow up, if you continue as negligent as you are at present?"

"I will not be careless when I grow up," said Clara.

"Ah, Clara," said Mr Stanley, "how many deceive themselves, and strengthen their evil habits, by saying, 'I will not do so and so when I grow up!' we pass so gradually and so insensibly from childhood to youth, and from youth to riper years, that we scarcely know where the one season ends and the other begins, so that there is no day in which we can say to ourselves, 'Now, from this day, I am no longer a child; I must leave off all bad habits.' Besides, even if there were any particular day to arrest our attention, and call us to give up evil habits, if these evil habits had been long indulged and deeply rooted, we would not only be unwilling to give them up, but we should find it very difficult, nay, almost impossible, to

get rid of them. I daresay you have often noticed in that part of the approach which is near the great ash-trees, how full of small plants the sides of the road are in summer, of little plants that have sprung from the seeds of the ash-trees?"

"Yes, papa," said Clara, "for I took out a great many of them last summer, and they came out quite easily."

"The gardener always takes these out as soon as they spring up," said Mr Stanley, "for he knows that he has then little difficulty in removing them. But, suppose that he were idle, and careless, and were to reason in this way, 'Well, these plants have newly sprung up; I know they would be easily taken out. Besides, they are not only of no use, but they make the road untidy. However, I cannot be troubled at present; I will come back some time or other; I daresay I shall get them out.' What would you think of him, Clara?"

"I would say that he was very stupid, papa, and that he was going to give himself a great deal of trouble."

"And what shall I say of you, Clara," said her papa, "when I hear you talk of putting off correcting your evil habits? The gardener may leave the young plants for a time, and when he returns, although they may be much grown, he may be able, by a little exertion, to take them out. But no human being can say to any bad habit, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no further.' At present, your carelessness and negligence do harm chiefly to yourself; but when you grow up, you will have more influence over others, and if you continue careless, what a great deal of harm you will do!"

"How, papa?" said Clara.

"You will neglect many things that ought to be done, and your daily conduct will do harm to those around you, by learning them to imitate your evil habits."

"I never thought of that, papa."

"No, I daresay not," said Mr Stanley. "Even if you neglected only what may at present be termed lesser duties compared with some others, such as your work at regular hours; personal neatness, and some

other things I could mention, it would be bad enough ; but you neglect other and more important duties. Did you pray this morning, Clara, when you got up ?”

“ No, papa,” said Clara, “ I quite forgot. I was in such a hurry to go to the lumber-room to look for a trunk, that I dressed myself as fast as I could, and ran out of my room. But I remembered afterwards,” continued Clara, “ and went upstairs after breakfast.”

“ Well, I am glad you did so,” said her papa ; “ it is better than forgetting altogether ; but I should like you never to forget that great duty at all. You never forget breakfast or dinner ; you do not forget to ask food for the body, which must one day perish ; how much more anxious you should be to ask God for food for your soul, which you know cannot perish like the body.”

By this time Mr Stanley and his little girl had arrived at the village, and almost reached the pleasant-looking house where Mrs Hill resided. It was situated at a little distance from the road, and as Mr

Stanley and Clara approached it, the sound of youthful voices was heard from the garden.

"I wonder why the girls are in the garden just now?" said Clara. "We are always at lessons at this time."

"You will see presently," said Mr Stanley, as he left Clara to go the school-room, while he followed a servant to the drawing-room.

Clara found no one in the schoolroom but one little girl, Annie Wilson, who was occupied in writing a French exercise.

"What is the matter?" said Clara; "why are all the others in the garden, and why are you sitting here?"

"To-day is a holiday," said Annie; "Mary Hudson's papa was here last night, and he asked Mrs Hill to let us have a holiday; that is the reason no one is at lessons. I must do this exercise before I go out. I wish you would help me, Clara; we are going to the wood near W. Dale, to gather violets, and if I do not finish this before it is time to go, Mademoiselle says I must be left at home."

"Let me see," said Clara, snatching the book from her; "this is a very easy exercise; I did it last week. I shall help you for a minute or two, and you must write as fast as you can. I have a great deal to tell you." The exercise was soon finished, and Clara, accompanied by Annie Wilson, left the schoolroom. As they passed the drawing-room window, Mrs Hill called Clara, and asked her to come in. Mrs Hill spoke to her for a short time about her departure from school, and concluded by saying that she had told Mr Stanley of the unexpected holiday, and had begged him to allow Clara to remain and spend the day with them. Clara was overjoyed at the prospect of a day's enjoyment, and returned to her companions.

About eleven o'clock, the whole party set out, accompanied by Miss Hill and one of the governesses. They walked along quietly, until they reached the wood at the entrance of the dale. Here they separated into small groups, and wandered about in search of violets, primroses, and the other spring flowers which were then in bloom.

Clara and Annie Wilson, who were great friends, rambled together, and after gathering a small basketful of flowers, they retraced their steps, in order to join their companions. As they walked slowly along through the withered oak and beech leaves, among which the early grass and flowers were peeping, Clara told her friend of her intended visit to Scotland. Annie Wilson was inclined to think that the visit would be very pleasant. "I know you will like Scotland very much," she said; "my home is in Scotland, and if I had a papa and a mamma, I would be at home now;" and tears filled Annie's eyes.

"Don't cry, Annie," said Clara, "for I have a papa, and when we have both learned all the lessons that we are ever to learn, I shall ask him to let you come and stay with me, for I am going to keep house for papa when I am older, and you shall help me. How happy we shall be! I wonder when we shall be grown up, and done with lessons?"

"Not for a long time, I am afraid," said Annie Wilson; "Charlotte Wake is sixteen, and she is not done with them yet."

“Well,” continued Clara, “we must make haste, and learn fast, and see if we can be done sooner.”

By this time they had left the wood, and were walking along the green and beautiful dale. The hills on each side were more properly steep green banks, easily climbed by the light feet of childhood and youth. Annie Wilson, Clara Stanley, and a few others, agreed to try who should first reach the summit of the green bank on one side. Miss Hill and some of the older girls followed them more slowly.

W. Dale was private property, and on the summit of the hill there was a little summer-house, into which the party entered to rest for a few minutes. The summer-house looked to the south, and from the place where they were sitting the girls could see the broad Humber glancing in the sunshine, and the Trent, where it united its waters to those of the Humber. Between them and the Humber, but far beneath the place where they sat, lay the wood in which they had been lately wandering, and among the trees rose the square tower of the village

church. To the right lay a great extent of country stretching till it was lost in the distant horizon. To the left the view was bounded by high grounds and woods.

"How beautiful the Humber looks from this distance!" said one of the girls; "who could believe that its banks are so full of mud, and its waters so dark?"

"The view from the top of the dale," said Miss Hill, "is indeed lovely. We may, I think, be allowed to forget the muddy banks of the Humber, when we see it glancing so beautifully in the sunshine, and dotted with so many white sails. How pretty the tower of the village church is among the trees, and how quiet is the dale! so quiet, that one might fancy that this was the Lord's day."

"I wish we might walk here often," said Annie Wilson.

"Our ordinary walks are very beautiful," said Miss Hill; "and this is so far from home, that we cannot reach it, and remain any time to enjoy its beauty, in the hours we have in general for walking, therefore

we reserve it for holidays. We should thus value it more, and not forget to lift up our hearts to Him who has made all things so beautiful.

“ God gave us this beautiful world, not that we might only look on it and admire it, but that, while we look on its wonderful beauty, we might remember to thank Him. Solomon says, ‘ Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun ;’ and very sweet it is, after the long, dark time of winter, to behold everything again reviving as if from sleep. The very hills, and woods, and fields, seem to rejoice; and there are few persons, if indeed any, who do not love spring. But spring was intended not only to add to our enjoyments, but also to teach us valuable lessons. The trees and plants that, during winter, appeared dead and dried up, begin to put forth leaves, and awaken to life; the plants that sank down in autumn below the surface of the earth, again appear; and the country, that in winter is so silent, seems full of animation. I wish one of you little girls would tell

me what we should think of when we see this."

"We should think of the resurrection," said Clara.

"Yes, we should," said Miss Hill, "and along with the thought of the resurrection should come the thought—'How will it be with me in that day?' For as we know that when spring comes the withered branches shall again be covered with leaves, as certainly do we know that after our bodies have mouldered in the grave they shall be raised again to new life. The present life that we live is but a small part of our existence; the future life is the most important life, and it is for it that we should chiefly prepare. Now, I know that all children and young people look forward with great delight to the time when they shall be what is called grown up. They have some sort of idea that it is a very delightful thing to be grown up, that there is a great deal of happiness in that work of which they hear people talk. Is it not so?" continued Miss Hill, looking around; "do not you all

think that you will be a great deal happier when you are no longer children?"

"I do," said Clara Stanley; "I feel quite sure that I shall be happy when I am a grown-up lady. Did you think so when you were a little girl?" continued Clara, addressing Miss Hill.

"Yes," said Miss Hill, "I thought exactly as you do; and although I often heard people talking as if they were not happy, still I thought that there must be some great happiness in life, and that I should certainly find it. Perhaps, if I were now to tell you that the things which you expect will make you happy when you are older, have no real power to confer happiness, you would scarcely believe me; so I shall not say much about them. I would rather say a few words to you about something which you may all have if you choose, and which will certainly make you happy, not for a year, or for a few years, but during your whole life, and far beyond it.

"You all know that the only way in which we can get to heaven is by believ-

ing on Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is not only the way to heaven, but, even in this world, it is He alone who can give true happiness. You remember that He rebuked the disciples when they would have kept back children from Him, and said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me;' and He said this, not only because He knew that those children alone who come to Him are safe, but because He knew that they are happy also. In Psalm ninetyeth, Moses says, 'O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.' And I wish you all to remember that, if you would be happy in another world, if you wish to be happy all your life in this world, if you wish to be happy now, you must seek the Lord Jesus, you must ask Him to be your Saviour, you must ask Him to give you His Holy Spirit; and how safe and happy you will be, I can scarcely tell you. It was a little boy who said, speaking of other children, 'What a pity it is that they do not all come to Christ—they would be so happy!' Yes, dear girls, what a pity

it is that you do not all come to Christ, for you would be so happy! What a number of promises and commands are addressed to the young in the Bible! 'I love them that love me,' says the Saviour, 'and they that seek me early shall find me.' "

"But," said Annie Wilson, "in a great many stories that I have read, the best children always die when they are quite young."

"A great many people die when they are young," said Miss Hill; "and, as we are all sinners, however young we are, how pleasant it is to read of children who have sought and found that Saviour whom we all need! But you know, my dear, that people seldom think of writing the life of any one until after his death, when, if he has served God, his life is written as an example to those who did not know him when he was alive. And thus it happens that we hear more of children who served God, and died young; but we are not to suppose that there are no other children who love God except those who

die young. There are many children who love the Lord Jesus ; perhaps no one knows of it at the time ; their friends may not know what it is that makes them so truthful, so gentle, so obedient and diligent, and so happy ; but God knows, Jesus knows that they are His children. Would you not like to be such children as these ? ”

“ Yes, we should,” said the girls.

“ Then do not rest satisfied with merely saying that you would like to be so, but pray in earnest to be made such as the Lord loves. Now I think we are sufficiently rested,” continued Miss Hill, “ so we shall take a look once more at the beautiful river, and walk on to join the others : they are nearly at the cottage at the end of the dale.”

The party walked on, two or three of the girls running on before, to gather flowers at the edge of the wood, and then loitering till Miss Hill and those who were with her came up. They soon arrived at the cottage, and joined their companions, who had rambled along the dale in its

lowest part. The cottage was the residence of a gamekeeper, on the estate of the gentleman to whom the dale belonged, and was frequently the resort of the young people when on a holiday expedition to the dale.

A table was spread in the largest room in the cottage. Mrs Hill had sent a large basket of provisions ; and, with the addition of eggs, milk, and cream from the gamekeeper's wife, the table was abundantly supplied. After dinner, and an hour's rest, the girls amused themselves in the dale, and returned home to tea, a little fatigued, but much delighted with their holiday ramble.

On their arrival at the village, Clara found her papa waiting with the dog-cart. After bidding good-bye to her companions, she was duly wrapped in cloaks and shawls, and Mr Stanley drove off. A few minutes brought them to Ashgrove, just as tea was ready ; and, after recounting her adventures, successively, to her papa and nurse, Clara retired to bed.

CHAPTER III.

THE next few days passed much as usual, except that Clara spent a good deal of time in consulting nurse as to what she should take with her to Scotland, and was also obliged to submit to a good deal of fitting on of dresses, which occasionally tried her temper. Many of the things which nurse declared to be indispensable were laid aside, owing to its being impossible to pack them within the prescribed limits; for Mr Stanley declared that a tolerably-sized trunk, and a carpet-bag, were quite sufficient for any little girl of ten years old.

Clara's dread of leaving home had quite vanished, but not her regret. She generally indulged in a fit of weeping when going to bed, for which, indeed, she had nurse's

example, who was very sorry to part with her darling, wayward as she was. The tears that Clara wept were not bitter: the fit of weeping was generally disturbed by visions of a bright future, in which the inhabitants of the manse, and her papa, largely shared. A few evenings after the holiday ramble we have described, Clara had gone to bed, when she heard the door-bell ring. It was moonlight; and the moon, which had long risen, and was nearly full, gave so much light, that every object was seen almost as distinctly as during the day. Anxious to see who had arrived, Clara sprang out of bed; and, hastily pulling off the counterpane, she wrapped herself in it, and ran to the window. Her bedroom was on the first floor; and, on looking out, she saw that a gig had stopped at the door, the driver of which was standing at the horse's head, while a tall gentleman was shaking hands with her papa. Presently her papa and the gentleman went into the house, and the gig drove off.

"That must be Mr Melville," thought Clara to herself. "I wish I had seen his

face; I should like to know what sort of face he has." She opened the door of her room, and listened for a moment to the bustle down-stairs. She heard her papa and the stranger pass along the hall, and enter the drawing-room, the door of which was immediately shut. Nurse, who had heard Clara open the door of her room, now came along the passage with a lighted candle in her hand. "Miss Clara," she said, as she looked at the little girl arrayed in the counterpane, "is it possible that you are standing there? It will be a wonder if you do not catch your death of cold. Go into your bed this very moment, and don't let me see you out of it again this night."

"I am just going," said Clara. "I got up when I heard the door-bell ring, and I really think that Mr Melville has come. I am sure it must be he. Oh, nurse, dear," she continued, "do go down-stairs, if you please, and ask if it is Mr Melville, and I promise you I will try to sleep; for I am sure that, unless I know, I shall lie awake thinking all night."

Nurse went down-stairs, and soon re-

turned with the information that it was Mr Melville, and after giving Clara strict injunctions to lie still, she once more left her to repose.

Next morning, when Clara went down to the breakfast-room, she found no one there but Mr Melville. She had not perceived him until she had fairly entered the room, and although she felt shy in meeting a stranger, she had too much politeness to think of leaving the room. Mr Melville came forward and spoke to her. "I need not ask who you are," he said; "your likeness to your papa tells me that you are Clara Stanley; and I suppose you can guess who I am, cannot you?"

"Yes," said Clara, looking up; "you are Mr Melville."

"We shall be very good friends, I hope," said Mr Melville; "your papa has kindly asked me to stay for a day or two. You shall shew me everything around your pleasant home, and I hope you will find us kind to you when you arrive in the Highlands."

Mr Melville's voice was so pleasant,

that Clara felt she must like him. She looked at the table at which he had been sitting; an open Bible lay upon it. Mr Melville noticed the glance she gave, and said, "I hope you love this precious book, Clara. It is the book that your mamma loved best; it is the book your papa loves; and all God's children love it."

"Papa reads the Bible with me every day," said Clara.

"How glad you should be," said Mr Melville, "that you have a papa who reads the Bible with you, who talks to you about God, about your soul, and about that kind Saviour who loves little children! But remember that it is not enough that your papa should read the Bible with you; if you would be happy, you must learn to love it yourself. The Bible is not like other books, which some people may read, and others may leave alone as they choose. Can you tell me the great difference between the Bible and other books?"

"Yes," said Clara; "men write other books just out of their own heads, but God told men how to write the Bible."

"Very true," said Mr Melville; "the Bible is thus God's book, and not man's book. Another great difference between the Bible and other books is, that the Bible is all true. There are no mistakes in the Bible. Even when men wish to write what is true, they make mistakes, sometimes because they do not quite understand what they are writing, and sometimes because they have been told what is wrong. But God, who sees and knows all things, can make no mistakes. Another difference is, that the greater number of other books are good only for this world; but the Bible tells us about another world, and how we may gain happiness in that world. Should we not value and love the Bible?"

"Yes, we should," said Clara.

"I hope you will do so," said Mr Melville. "Supposing some one were to give a man a book, and tell him that in that book he would find a way by which he might become very rich, how often he would read the book! He would read it through carefully, and turn back over the pages,

to see whether he had not missed anything about the way to become rich. Now, God has given us a book, and that book tells us, not how we may gain money in this world, but how we may become rich in another world. Christ speaks of a treasure in heaven, very different from the treasures of earth, and the Bible alone tells how we may gain that treasure. The Bible tells us also of two ways, and it tells us also that in one or other of these ways all the people in this world are walking. When we look on the people around us, how very different they seem ! I daresay you notice that yourself, Clara ? ”

“ Yes,” said Clara ; “ some are rich, and some very, very poor ; some are young, and some old.”

“ Yes,” said Mr Melville ; “ and there are even greater differences than these. Some persons are clever, very clever, and others can scarcely be taught to read ; some are kind, amiable, and gentle, others ill-tempered and selfish ; yet all these people, so different in their outward condition, and with so many differences in their

characters and disposition, are walking in one or other of two ways only—the broad way that leads to hell, and the narrow way that leads to heaven. Now, the Bible tells us what is meant by walking in the safe and narrow way, and how we may walk in it. It tells us that, if we would walk in the narrow way to heaven, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must be sorry for our sins, we must seek to have our hearts changed by God's Holy Spirit, and truly seek to please God. The Bible also tells us of many who walked in the narrow way, that we may be encouraged by their example. There was Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to be counted one of the poor persecuted Israelites, and have God for his father, than to be a prince in Egypt. There were Abraham, and Elijah (who was taken up to heaven without dying), and a great many more. You will find from the Bible that all ranks of people have walked in the narrow way to heaven. There were David and Hezekiah, and other

kings of Judah ; and there was Lazarus, the poor diseased beggar, who lay at the rich man's gate. I hope, my dear little girl, that, if you have not yet begun to think of that narrow way, you will begin to-day."

Mr Stanley now appeared, and after shaking hands with Mr Melville, said, " I see that my little girl has already made your acquaintance?"

" O yes," said Mr Melville, " we are very good friends, and have had quite a long conversation."

The bell now rung for prayers, and Clara was a little astonished to see Mr Melville take her papa's place, and open the Bible.

" Papa," she whispered hastily, as the servants were entering the room, " why are you not going to read?"

" Because Mr Melville is so kind as to do so," said Mr Stanley; " and your papa is very glad to be a listener for one morning."

Mr Melville read the twenty-fifth chapter of St Matthew. and, after he had

finished reading it, he spoke earnestly for a few minutes concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the uncertainty of life, and urged affectionately on his hearers the necessity of seeking Christ immediately, that they might not, like the foolish virgins, find the door of mercy shut. He then prayed, and Clara wondered how he could remember to pray for every one in the room, even for herself.

After breakfast, Mr Stanley told Clara that she might go and amuse herself for an hour or two, while he was engaged with Mr Melville. "You had better go to nurse," he continued; "I have spoken to her this morning, and she knows what our arrangements are. I daresay you will find something to do with her."

Clara went up-stairs, and found nurse kneeling on the nursery floor, with a large trunk before her, and several drawers on the floor at her side.

"I suppose you have heard the news, Miss Clara?" she said.

"I know we are going to Scotland to-morrow," said Clara.

"But did you not hear that I was to go with you as far as Edinburgh?" she said.

"No," said Clara; "are you really coming? I am so glad!—and papa is coming too?"

"No, Miss Clara; I saw your papa before prayers, and he said that he found that it was impossible to go with you to Edinburgh, because he must go to some large meeting to-morrow; so I am to go with you, for it is not to be supposed that my master would like to trouble Mr Melville to take care of you in such a long journey."

"I am very sorry that papa is not coming," said Clara.

"No doubt," said nurse; "but it makes only the difference of one day, for your papa says we shall be in Edinburgh to-morrow night. And now, my dear Miss Clara, you must let me pack as fast as I can, for we have to set off very early in the morning."

Clara occupied herself in handing various articles to nurse; and after spend-

ing some hours in the nursery, she went, at nurse's request, into the garden. In the afternoon she walked with her papa and Mr Melville.

In the evening, before she went to bed, her papa took her into his study, and placing her on a chair beside him, he said, "I am very sorry, my dear little girl, that I cannot go with you to Edinburgh as I intended. I must be present at a large meeting in the town to-morrow; but nurse is going with you, and you already know Mr Melville, so that you will not feel lonely. You will not have time to write to me from Edinburgh, but you must write to me when you get to Inverallan Manse."

"Papa, I am very sorry that you are not coming; but I will not cry," said Clara, endeavouring to keep down her sobs. "I will try to be good, and do all that you wish, and I will write long letters to you, my own dear papa."

"Look here," said Mr Stanley; "I have something that will help you in writing letters;" and he untied a brown

paper parcel, and displayed to Clara's admiring eyes a neat rosewood desk. On opening it, Clara saw writing-paper and blotting-paper, pens, envelopes, and sealing-wax. She smiled through her tears, and thanked her papa. After Mr Stanley had read and prayed with his little girl, she went up-stairs, carrying her desk, which nurse promised to pack for her.

Next morning, as the daylight was beginning to appear, sounds of unusual bustle were heard at Ashgrove, and very soon after, nurse appeared to tell Clara that it was time to get up.

"Surely it is very early?" said Clara, sitting up, and rubbing her eyes.

"It is early," said nurse; "but the carriage is to be at the door at six o'clock, for we have a long way to drive before we reach the railway station. I shall have your breakfast ready for you in the nursery, and if you get up just now, I shall have time to put up the rest of your things, without being in a bustle at the last."

At six o'clock, the party left Ashgrove : nurse was seated on the rumble of the carriage, with her feet on carpet bags. Mr Melville, Mr Stanley, and Clara, were inside. The carriage was open, and although Clara at first felt very sorrowful at the thought of bidding good-bye to her papa so soon, yet the freshness and beauty of a bright spring morning, with the exhilarating influence of the morning air, made her feel much more tranquil than she had been disposed to be at first. The fresh, green, early leaves were beginning to appear on the tall elms, the cool breath of the morning came from sweetbrier hedges, orchards, and green fields ; the cattle were standing lazily in the meadows, now and then stooping to take a mouthful of grass ; the blue smoke curled upwards from many a cottage chimney ; and little children left their beds, and ran to the cottage doors to look at the travellers as they drove past. A drive of some miles brought them to the town where the railway station was, about twenty minutes before the departure of the train. After

the tickets were procured, the luggage deposited in its place, and the travellers comfortably seated in one of the carriages, Mr Stanley stood talking for a few minutes, until a man came and shut the doors of all the carriages. Then there was a last good-bye—the signal for starting was given—it was followed by a long, shrill whistle. The train began to move, slowly at first, so that Clara for an instant could still see her papa; but presently it went on more rapidly, and by and by they were moving with the speed of the wind on their journey to Scotland.

It was late at night when they arrived in Edinburgh, and Clara was so thoroughly tired, that when they reached the hotel in Princes Street, she fell asleep while nurse was arranging her room. Nurse awoke her, and took her up-stairs, where she was put to bed, and slept soundly. As they were not to depart northwards till ~~ten~~ o'clock next morning, nurse did not awake Clara very early. At nine o'clock Clara went down-stairs to the sitting-room, where breakfast was on the table. Mr

Melville had breakfasted some time before, and had gone out to pay one or two visits before setting out for the Highlands. At half-past nine he returned, and after speaking to Clara, he asked nurse if she thought Clara would be able for another day's journey, after the past day's fatigue. Nurse assured him that Clara was quite strong and able for the journey, and Mr Melville, turning to Clara, said, "I think you had better get on your bonnet, and we shall walk to the station; it is but a little distance from this. I shall send off the luggage immediately."

As Clara was walking along Princes Street, she looked with wonder on a town so different from any she had seen in England. The gray old castle on its steep rock, the tall, many-storeyed houses of the old town, filled her with admiration. She put many questions to Mr Melville, some of which he answered, and others he promised to answer when they had set out on their journey. Just as they were about to set off, nurse put a large parcel in Clara's lap, filled with a variety of biscuits,

gingerbread nuts, &c., and a smaller one of barley-sugar.

"Now, good-bye, my dear Miss Clara," she said, "and don't forget your own nurse. I was often cross to you, my darling, but I know you won't mind that now."

"No, indeed," whispered Clara through her tears, "for it was I that made you cross; I was so careless and idle. And don't cry, nurse, dear, for I am going to write a long letter to you very soon."

Poor nurse turned away to hide her grief, and the train started.

In a few hours they reached the town where the railway terminated, and after resting for a little while, Mr Melville set out with Clara to meet the coach which was now to convey them northwards. When they arrived at the coach-office, they found that the horses were standing ready to be put into the coach, while the driver was busily arranging quantities of small parcels in various places in the vehicle. He touched his hat to Mr Melville, and inquired if he were going north.

On being answered in the affirmative, he opened the coach door to let Clara in. There was no room inside for Mr Melville, and when Clara saw the coach filled with people with whom she was utterly unacquainted, she begged so earnestly to be allowed to go outside with Mr Melville, that he consented to let her do so. The coachman promised to put the little lady in a comfortable seat, and Clara, wrapped in plaids, with her feet on a well-stuffed, substantial carpet-bag, was seated, much to her own satisfaction, beside Mr Melville, with her face to the horses, and presently began the last part of her journey.

The sun had set, and the shades of evening were beginning to deepen, when the coach reached the stage at which Mr Melville and Clara were to leave it. A dog-cart was standing near the inn door, and Mr Melville told Clara that they must now leave the coach, and drive for a mile or two before they reached the manse. Presently they were seated in the dog-cart, Clara in front, with Mr Melville and the man who had been waiting for them be-

hind. They turned off the public road, and crossing by a small bridge a beautiful stream, were speedily at the manse gate. Many voices were heard exclaiming, "Papa has come! Mamma, mamma, here is papa!" Many arms were immediately thrown around Mr Melville, and numerous voices eagerly welcomed him home. As soon as he could disengage himself, Mr Melville said, "Come, children, you are forgetting that I have brought some one with me." He then led Clara forward, and introduced her to Mrs Melville and the children. Mrs Melville stooped to kiss the little girl, and her sweet smile and gentle voice took away any feeling of apprehension that might linger about Clara's heart, and made it glow with love to one so kind.

Mrs Melville took Clara up-stairs to a very neat, large room, in which there were two beds and two chests of drawers. "Elizabeth is to sleep in this room with you," said Mrs Melville, "and Mary sleeps in the little room that opens off this apartment. I think you will be comfortable; and I hope my girls may try to make you

happy. I shall assist you now to take off your bonnet and cloak, and when you have washed your hands you will feel a little refreshed, and we shall go down to tea." Mrs Melville then opened Clara's carpet-bag, to take out some of her things, and after assisting her to take off her travelling dress, and make herself tidy, she took her down to the dining-room. Here they found Mr Melville seated, with all his children around him. Of the five children at the manse, Frank was the eldest, and was nearly fourteen; Mary, the second, was between twelve and thirteen; Elizabeth was eleven, nearly a year older than Clara; while James and Kenneth, the two youngest, were respectively of the ages of seven and eight years. As soon as Clara entered the room, they left their papa. Mary placed a chair at the table for Clara, and sat down beside her; and after Mr Melville had asked a blessing, they had tea. Kenneth and James sat on the sofa, as they had had tea some time before, and as it was getting late, Mrs Melville sent them very soon to bed. About half an hour after tea, Mr Melville

had prayers, and immediately after that the younger portion of the household went to bed.

Inverallan Manse, which was now Clara's home, was beautifully situated among the hills. High hills sheltered it on the north and east, while on the south lay a broad strath, with a river winding through it. To the south and west the distant view was bounded by mountains. The lower slope of the hills near the house was covered with birch-trees, which, although not yet in leaf, were beautiful from the lightness and delicacy of their form. A small stream, one of the numerous rivulets that, in a mountainous country, fill the air with the sound of falling waters, passed the manse; and after wandering through the village of Inverallan, and turning a mill, it entered the river that wound through the strath. This stream was a great acquisition to the children of the manse. Many a summer afternoon was spent on the margin of its clear pools, beneath the alders and hazels that fringed its borders, and many a small vessel had gone down its tiny waterfalls, and been wrecked in its mimic rapids.

The village of Inverallan was very irregularly built. It had nothing that deserved the name of a street. The houses were principally thatched, and in most cases stood separate from each other, with a small plot of ground either before or behind. A small bridge crossed the stream that passed through the village, and all the ducks and children in the village were continually swimming and wading in the waters of the stream, or wandering upon its banks. Shoes were not much esteemed among the children of Inverallan, and even those parents who could afford to give their little ones the comforts of shoes and stockings, preferred in spring and summer to let them go without them; for instances had been known in which shoes were carried down the stream, and never more seen, while their careless owners were amusing themselves in the water.

The manse was situated at a little distance from the village, and the church stood between them, overshadowed by some large and venerable ash-trees. The garden at the manse was not large, but it

was neatly kept, and very productive, having both good soil and an excellent exposure. Both Mr and Mrs Melville were very fond of flowers, and although Mr Melville never gave to his garden that time which should have been devoted to his parish, yet, in the choice flowers, in the beautiful arrangement, and in the general air of refined beauty which the garden wore, it was evident that in all the operations there was a directing hand. George Fergusson, the gardener, groom, and man-of-all-work at the manse, was himself fond of flowers, and capable of following any directions; and he devoted to the garden more time than he would otherwise have done. And thus it came to pass that no Highland manse, and very few even of those in the Lowlands, could rival, in the beauty that immediately surrounded it, the Manse of Inverallan.

CHAPTER IV.

NEXT forenoon, Mrs Melville and Mary assisted Clara to unpack her things, and arrange them in drawers. "I have given Elizabeth and you each a chest of drawers," said Mrs Melville, addressing Clara, "and I hope you will keep them neat. Mary has the next room entirely to herself; it is a very small abode," continued Mrs Melville, opening the door, and shewing Clara a small room, with space only for a bed, chest of drawers, washing-stand, and chair. "And now, my dear little girl, I must tell you of an arrangement which I have made, in order that you and Elizabeth may have a place entirely to yourselves during some part of the day. I am sure you pray morn-

ing and evening; but it is not only necessary to pray morning and evening, but, as far as we are able, we should seek to have a retired place in which to pray. Mary has her own room, you can have this room, and there is a little unoccupied light closet, at the end of the passage, which I have given to Elizabeth. Elizabeth must dress quickly in the morning, and then she can go to her own small apartment. I am anxious to give you all as much quietness as possible, and to take away all possibility of making the excuse for leaving out prayer, that 'there was some one in the room.' It is so necessary that we should pray for forgiveness, for strength, for help to do what is right; and it is such a privilege, that we are allowed to pray, that we should seek to secure a place where we may pray without interruption. God is indeed gracious, to be willing to listen to us poor sinners, to let us come and tell Him all that we need. How thankful we should be to be permitted to pray to Him! and I hope that you, my dear children, may learn to value

this privilege, that you may pray not only as a duty, but as delighting to seek God."

After Clara's things were unpacked, Mrs Melville had her trunk and carpet-bag removed. She then told Clara "that, as it was Saturday, and so soon after her arrival, the girls were not to have any lessons, and that, if she did go out, she had better not walk far, as she had had a very fatiguing journey the two preceding days." Mrs Melville then went down-stairs.

The three girls sat down at the window, and began to talk, when suddenly Clara said, "I must write to papa to-day, and I think I had better do it just now."

"The letters go early in the morning," said Mary; "but I shall go down-stairs and ask mamma about your letter."

Mary returned in a minute or two, to say that her papa had written the evening before, to tell Mr Stanley of Clara's safe arrival, and that her mamma thought that Clara had better write in the afternoon.

"Let us go out, then," said Clara; "I

should like very much to see your gardens and your pony."

In front of the house they found Kenneth and James amusing themselves by riding on sticks. These two brothers were almost inseparable. They never wished for other companions than each other, and through a long summer day, had been known to play together without having a single dispute. James, the youngest, was eager and impetuous in all that he did, full of affection to those around him, and always ready to shew it, although occasionally in a boisterous manner; while Kenneth was calm, gentle, self-possessed, very steady at his lessons, and the general peace-maker among his brothers and sisters.

"Come along, children," said Elizabeth, "we are going to shew Clara the pony; I suppose it is in the field?"

"No," said James; "Frank has it. Papa sent him to a farm more than two miles away from this."

"How stupid!" said Elizabeth. "Papa might have known that just the very day

after Clara came, we would like to shew her the pony. Could Frank not have walked?"

"But papa told him to ride," said Kenneth.

"Well," said Elizabeth, "I just say what I said before, that papa might have thought of Clara."

"Oh! Bessie," said Kenneth, looking quite shocked, "you should not speak about papa in that way; papa may do what he likes."

"What are you waiting for?" said Elizabeth; "you may go and look at what you like, but I am going to stay here, since we cannot have the pony."

"Elizabeth," said Mary, "what is the use of being so much out of temper? it can do no good. Come with us, and we shall shew Clara the garden, and the poultry-yard, and go afterwards to the burn."

"I will not go," said Elizabeth.

Clara looked quite astonished, but Mary took her hand, and drew her away to the garden. James followed them. "Come, Kenneth," he said.

"Go on without me," said Kenneth, "and I shall run after you."

Kenneth turned to his sister, who had sat down on one of the steps of the hall door. "Do come, Elizabeth," he said; "we cannot be happy without you."

"Go away, and don't plague me," was the ungracious answer.

"I will wait for you," said Kenneth, "if you will only try to get the better of the bad temper, and then we can all play together. Frank will very soon come home, and we can have Donald in the afternoon."

"What makes you say anything about bad temper?" said Elizabeth. "You all say that I have a bad temper, and it is very unjust, and not true. There is nothing the matter with me, but I do not choose to go wandering about the garden, when we might have had the pony."

"Kenneth," said his mamma, who put her head out of the drawing-room window, "you had better join the others in the garden. Go, my dear boy," she continued, as she saw him lingering, "and do

you, Elizabeth, come to me in the drawing-room."

Slowly the little girl raised herself, and very unwillingly she walked into the drawing-room, where her mamma was seated at work.

"Come along, Elizabeth," said her mamma; "since you cannot be happy out of doors this beautiful day, we must try what a little indoor occupation will do."

"Mamma, I would rather go out," said Elizabeth.

"And I would rather see you out of doors than here," said her mamma; "but I really cannot let you remain with your brothers and sister, while you give way to such violent ill temper, and for mere trifles."

"It was not a trifle, mamma," said Elizabeth.

"What put you out of temper?" said her mamma.

"We could not get the pony."

"Then I suppose you did not know that papa had sent Frank with the pony to Ardarroch?"

"Yes, mamma," said Elizabeth; "Kenneth told me."

"I am deeply grieved," said Mrs Melville; "you may go up to your own room, and when you feel really sorry for your fault, you may come to me."

Elizabeth left the room very angry indeed, and as she went up-stairs, the sound of her foot was heard on every step. What could have made Elizabeth so irritable? The truth is, that it was not difficult at any time to make Elizabeth angry, and that morning she had had a little dispute with her brother Frank, and he had laughed at her so much, that it left a disagreeable feeling on her mind even after the dispute had ceased, and made her ready to quarrel about anything with anybody. It is a dangerous thing when brothers and sisters laugh at each other; it is very apt to produce wrong feelings, and to weaken their love for each other. And it is also a very foolish thing to get angry about being laughed at. It can do no good; it makes us feel uncomfortable, and tempts others to laugh at us still

more. It is much better to bear a jest good-humouredly, and then no harm is done. We cannot, however, do these things of ourselves. We need God's grace to enable us to keep from unkind jesting, and we need His grace to enable us to bear unkind jesting, and to keep from being angry. Elizabeth had forgotten to ask God to help her in the morning, so she got angry with Frank, and angry because the pony was gone; angry with her own dear papa, and angry with the kind little brother who had endeavoured to lead her back to what was right; and now she was angry with her mamma; and as she entered her room, and shut the door, she had a sort of idea that she was very ill treated, and that everything was going wrong.

She sat down at first on a chair behind the door, doing nothing, and looking very unhappy. Presently, however, she heard voices talking and laughing. She went to the window, which looked to the front of the house, but she saw no one. Recollecting that the window of Mary's small bed-

chamber opened to the garden, she went to it. The window was very small, and almost entirely covered with ivy. The bright sunbeams scarcely entered the room, so thick was the green shade that covered the window; but, by putting aside one or two long shoots of ivy, Elizabeth could see perfectly all that was doing in the garden. George Fergusson was sowing annuals, and her brothers James and Kenneth were walking after him, looking at all his operations, and holding the tallies and pencil for him. Mary and Clara were also standing near, for George had promised to leave in the papers a few seeds of such annuals as he thought would be best for the children's gardens. Elizabeth had long looked forward to this day, and was now really vexed to think that she had deprived herself of so much pleasure.

She let go the shoots of ivy which she had been holding, and then sat down on the floor, and began to weep.

"What could make me so angry?" she said to herself. "Oh, now I recollect;

I made a mistake when I was speaking to Frank this morning, and he laughed at me for a long time ; and when he saw that I was vexed, he went on laughing, and threw back his head, and looked so provoking, that I felt terribly angry. I wish Frank would not laugh when I make mistakes. And then the pony ; oh ! what will Clara think of me ? and I daresay papa never thought of Clara, and never thought we would like to shew her the pony. Oh ! shall I ever get the better of this bad temper ?" sobbed the little girl ; " it makes me often so unhappy, and I know that I was doing wrong to-day." Just at this moment Elizabeth thought she heard a tap at the door of the room in which she and Clara slept. Presently the door was opened, and she heard Frank say, " Where are you, Elizabeth ?"

She got up, and wiped away her tears as well as she could, and opening the door of the little room, saw Frank.

" Mamma told me you were up-stairs," said Frank, " and I have come to tell you, Bessie, that I am very sorry I laughed at

you so much this morning about that mistake, and I promise to try never to do so again; so let us be friends, and we can have the pony this afternoon, and give Clara a ride.

"Come away down-stairs now, and don't cry any more," continued Frank, taking her hand.

"No, no, Frank," said Elizabeth; "I must see mamma first; and she said I was not to come down-stairs until I was sorry for being angry."

"But you are not cross with me now?" said Frank.

"No," said Elizabeth; "and, Frank," she continued, "do you think mamma would come up-stairs? for my eyes are so red, and I am afraid I shall meet Clara Stanley or one of the servants."

"I shall ask mamma to come up-stairs," said Frank; "and may I tell her you are sorry?"

"Yes," said his sister.

Elizabeth sat down at the window, and waited so long, that she thought that her mamma did not intend to come up-stairs.

In about ten minutes after Frank left her, the door was opened gently, and Mrs Melville came into the room.

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "I am very sorry that I was so angry this forenoon. Will you forgive me?"

"I must forgive you, since you are sorry, Elizabeth," said her mamma; "but I cannot help feeling very unhappy about you."

"Dearest mamma," sobbed Elizabeth, "do not feel unhappy about me. Oh! mamma, I do not wish to grieve you. I will try to get the better of this bad temper."

"But, my dear little girl," said Mrs Melville, "how often you have promised to do so!"

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "do you not believe that I am sorry?"

"I quite believe that you are sorry at the time, my dear," said her mamma; "but I fear that your sorrow is not of the right kind. I think that you feel sorry on account of the unhappiness that you find evil temper produces to yourself,

and the many disagreeable consequences that often follow a fit of bad temper. You feel sorry also when you see papa and me look unhappy about your naughtiness; but true sorrow for sin does not arise from any of these things, for it is possible to know and feel that our evil habits are hurtful to ourselves, and grievous to our friends, and yet go on indulging them. While you feel sorry for grieving your earthly parents, I fear that your Heavenly Father is forgotten. You must remember, that when you are disobedient and cross to papa and me, you sin against God. It is from God that we receive our authority over you, and it is God that commands you to render loving obedience to us, and when you fail in your duties to us, it is against the Lord that you sin. I notice frequently, that when you receive papa's forgiveness and mine, you seem to think that all is over, and that you may be quite happy. Now, I should like you not to feel happy until you ask and obtain the Lord's forgiveness."

"But, mamma," said Elizabeth, "I

ask God very often to forgive my sins."

"I believe you do," said her mamma; "but there are two ways of doing everything. If you were to come to papa or me, and say, 'I am very sorry I was naughty, will you forgive me?' and all the time look quite careless, what answer do you think we would give?"

"I think you would say that you did not believe that I was sorry."

"Certainly we would," said Mrs Melville; "and when we go to God, asking Him to forgive our sins, while all the time our sins give us no concern, we only mock God. The forgiveness of sins, the gift of a new heart, are such inestimable blessings, that God expects us to feel that they are blessings, and ask for them in an earnest manner. Now, my dear child, I have so often pointed out the evils of bad temper, that I need not at present repeat what I have so often had occasion to say. I would only ask you, Elizabeth, to pray most earnestly that God would lead you to see the evil of sin, of all sin, and

that he would enable you now to seek the Lord Jesus. I know, my little girl, that you have a great deal to struggle against. Our hearts are altogether sinful and corrupt ; but some hearts shew that sinfulness and corruption more in one way than another. You are disposed to be irritable, perhaps more so than some others, and have therefore greater difficulty in overcoming your temper ; but do not forget that the Lord Jesus is both able and willing to help you ; and if you earnestly seek help, he will most certainly give it. When you feel disposed to be angry, think of Jesus, think of all He suffered for our sins, and do not grieve him by doing what he hates. You remember how the little hymn begins which you learned so many years ago?—

‘ When for some little insult given,
My angry passions rise,
I’ll think how Jesus came from heaven,
And bore his injuries.’

And when you feel inclined to be angry at a brother for laughing at you, think of all the angry words and cruel treatment

that the Lord Jesus bore when on earth, and then ask yourself if it is doing much for Him to bear meekly a little unkind jesting."

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "will you ask God to forgive me?"

"Willingly," said her mamma; and she knelt with her little girl, and putting her arm round her, entreated God that He would forgive her child, and bless her by giving her a new heart, and the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, that she might feel how displeasing sin was in God's sight, and might turn from it. When Mrs Melville arose, she said to Elizabeth, "You may come down-stairs when you choose; we shall have dinner in half-an-hour. Clara is busy at present writing a letter to her papa, and she looks so tired; that I think you had better put off the ride on the pony until Monday afternoon; Clara will then be less tired. We can take a nice long walk on Monday afternoon, and have Donald with the side-saddle." Mrs Melville then went down-stairs.

In the afternoon, as Clara was too tired to go out, the girls remained at home with her. They assisted Frank (who was making a boat) by hemming the sails for him, and did various other little things, besides setting their play-room in order, arranging their book-shelves, and otherwise preparing for the coming Sabbath. Clara felt almost at home. The children at Inverallan were all very kind to her, and were anxious to do everything that could please her, so that the first day of her visit passed very pleasantly. Although she did not forget her papa, she very wisely resolved not to waste time in vain sorrow, but to try and please her papa, and be as happy as she could.

The evening passed rapidly away, and half-an-hour after Kenneth and James had gone to bed, Mrs Melville said that she thought it would be a good plan to have prayers a little earlier, that Clara might go to bed, as she was so tired. After prayers, Clara, Mary, and Elizabeth, went up-stairs to bed. When they had undressed themselves, and were in bed,

the nursery-maid came and took away the candle. Elizabeth called her as she was leaving the room.

"Jessie," she said, "will you pull up the window-blind? We wish to see the moon."

"Jessie," said Mary, from the inner room, "mamma wishes Clara to go to sleep soon; tell Elizabeth that she must not have the blind pulled up."

"For five minutes, Mary," said Elizabeth; "only for five minutes."

Jessie pulled up the window-blind, and said, "I am going down-stairs for something to the kitchen, and when I come up again I shall pull down the blind."

Jessie came back, according to promise, and not only pulled down the window-blind, but closed the shutters.

"How dull and dark this is!" said Elizabeth; "I suppose I must go to sleep; are you sleepy, Clara?"

"Yes," said Clara. "Elizabeth," she continued, in a very sleepy voice, "I think your papa and mamma are very kind. I

wish papa were here ; I think he would be very happy." Here her voice stopped, and when Elizabeth next spoke to her she was fast asleep.

CHAPTER V.

ON Monday morning, after breakfast, Mrs Melville said to Clara, "Now, my dear, we must consult a little about the lessons. I daresay you will be able to go on with Elizabeth; she is not much older than you are, and I hope I shall have such a pleasant report to give concerning your progress to your papa when he comes to see us. I shall take you along with Mary and Elizabeth for a French lesson in the afternoon. We generally have a little plain work in the afternoon, for you know it is quite necessary that girls should know how to do needlework. Your English lessons you will say to Mr Stewart, along with Mary and Elizabeth, and writing and arithmetic you will also learn along

with them. In a few days you will become quite accustomed to the lessons, and I hope we shall go on happily together." At this moment one of the servants came into the room to tell Mrs Melville that some one wished to see her. As soon as Mrs Melville had left the room, Clara said, "Oh! lessons, lessons; how I hate lessons! wherever you go, always lessons to learn!"

"Do you really hate them?" said Elizabeth, looking up with great animation; "so do I. Do not look so shocked, Mary; but I am really glad that Clara is not so good as you are about lessons. However," continued Elizabeth, looking a little more serious, "lessons must be learned, after all; and although they are tiresome, yet it is really the best plan to learn them. I do not like to vex papa and mamma, or I would be more idle than I am. Papa says it is a sin to be idle, and I am going to try to be industrious."

"Who is Mr Stewart?" said Clara.

"I do not very well know who he is," said Elizabeth, "except that he used to teach in a school a long way off; but he

was delicate, so the doctors sent him to the country, and when he got a little better, papa asked him to teach us, and we all like him very much. He comes here every morning for three or four hours, and Frank goes to him in the afternoon also. There he is coming in at the garden gate," continued Elizabeth; "I must go to call the boys."

Calling the boys consisted in standing at the foot of the stairs, and in no very ladylike manner desiring her brothers James and Kenneth to come down to lessons.

"Hush, Elizabeth," said her mamma, who now appeared; "I have often told you that you must not use your voice in that way. You must speak quietly and gently, and when you wish to bring your brothers to lessons, go up-stairs for them."

"But, mamma, it is so troublesome," said Elizabeth.

"We must be content to take a little trouble," said her mamma, "in order to do what is right, and avoid what is wrong. You disturb the household in general, and

papa in particular, very much by your habit of calling aloud. But here come Kenneth and James."

"We were waiting for Mr Stewart outside the garden-gate," said Kenneth, "for we have got all our books ready."

"I have brought another pupil for you, Mr Stewart," said Mrs Melville, after the morning salutation had passed; "but you have so many already, that I think I must relieve you of one or two. Kenneth and James may say their English lessons to me while you are engaged in hearing the girls, and they can return to you for writing and arithmetic. At least," continued Mrs Melville, as Mr Stewart was about to remonstrate, "we shall pursue this plan for a few weeks, until you are stronger, for Frank takes up a great deal of your time already. I hope I may prove as successful in teaching Kenneth and James as you have been." Mr Stewart bowed, and thanked Mrs Melville; and taking James and Kenneth with her, Mrs Melville went to the drawing-room.

The forenoon passed more pleasantly

than Clara had anticipated. Although Mr Stewart was particularly mild and gentle, he would be obeyed, and he explained the lessons so pleasantly, that Clara really took pains to learn them. There was, to be sure, the charm of novelty, a charm which very often makes children do well at their studies for a time at a new school, and with a new teacher.

Mr Stewart found that Clara could go on quite well with Elizabeth, who was glad to have a companion in her studies ; for Mary was not only a year and a half older than Elizabeth, but considerably more studious. Kenneth and James went to their writing-lesson shortly after eleven o'clock, and at half-past twelve Mr Stewart left them.

After arranging their books, the children went to the garden for more than an hour. They employed themselves in sowing the seeds which George Fergusson had given them on Saturday. Clara, who had found a plot of ground ready for her on her first visit to the garden, had a share of the seeds also.

By the time the seeds were sown, it was nearly two o'clock, and Jessie came to desire them to come in and get ready for dinner. They returned to the house, and by the time they had washed their hands and brushed their hair, dinner was on the table. At dinner, Mr Melville said that he was going to visit a poor man who lived about two miles distant from the manse, that he should set out immediately after dinner, and that he wished Mrs Melville and the children would come to meet him. To this request every one joyfully assented.

Immediately after dinner, Mr Melville set out to pay his visits; Frank went to Mr Stewart; and the three girls, and James, and Kenneth, accompanied Mrs Melville to the drawing-room.

"What sort of work can you do, my dear?" said Mrs Melville, addressing Clara.

"I can scarcely work at all," said Clara, looking rather ashamed. "I can knit a little, but I do not know well how to sew."

"But you can learn," said Mrs Melville, smiling, "and if you take pains, you may soon learn to sew very neatly. We must begin with a little hemming, and when you can make neat stitches, you shall have some pocket-handkerchiefs to hem." Mrs Melville gave Clara a bit of muslin, and when she had laid down the hem, and had shewn Clara how to begin, she turned to Elizabeth, and said, "Where is your work, Elizabeth?"

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "I wish you would let me knit a pair of socks for Mrs M'Intosh's baby."

"If you have finished Kenneth's pocket-handkerchiefs, I shall let you do so," said her mamma.

"I have three to hem, mamma, and that would take so long," said Elizabeth; "may I leave them off for a short time? Kenneth is in no hurry for his pocket-handkerchiefs; are you, Kenneth?"

"No, dear," said Kenneth.

"Now, mamma," said Elizabeth, "may I?"

"I am sorry, my dear," said her mam-

ma, "to deny this request: you are very much in the habit of beginning a piece of work with great eagerness, and getting tired directly. I allowed you to leave off hemming the pocket-handkerchiefs last week, that you might make a mark to send to Aunt Murray on her birthday; but they must be finished now, before anything else is begun. Now, don't look grave about it, or think that it is any hardship to finish work. To-day is Monday; you may hem a handkerchief to-day, and one to-morrow, and one next day, so that on Thursday you may begin the socks."

"But can I do a whole handkerchief each day, mamma?" said Elizabeth.

"Certainly," said her mamma, "and perhaps more. It wants now ten minutes to three, and we need not set out to meet papa until four o'clock, or a little past it, so that we have abundance of time. But do not put off time, my dear; move quickly, get a needle and thread, and begin cheerfully, and you will be surprised at the quantity of work you will be able to do." Roused by her mamma's kind

words, Elizabeth laid aside all thoughts of the socks, and began immediately to hem a handkerchief. Mary was already engaged in finishing some work for her mamma; Mrs Melville had also a piece of work; Kenneth was plaiting some whipcord; and James had a book.

"May I read a little to you, mamma?" said James; "I have such a nice story here!"

"Oh, mamma," said Mary, "please don't let James read, he makes so many blunders."

"You need not listen, Mary," said James; "I am going to read to mamma."

"Hush, James," said his mamma; "speak gently, my dear boy; and Mary," continued Mrs Melville, "you should remember how young James is, and that he cannot be expected to read without making errors. You forget the blunders you used to make yourself, and how many you still make in different things."

"But nothing that James reads can be very interesting," said Mary.

"Perhaps not," said her mamma; "but

if you wish to be happy, Mary, and to make others happy also, learn to take an interest in what pleases them. It is very chilling, and produces many wrong feelings in the heart, to see others take no interest in what pleases us. Such conduct weakens the love that should be so strong between brothers and sisters; while, on the contrary, a smile, a kind word of interest, and an ear ready to listen, do a great deal to win and keep love."

"I know, mamma," said Mary; "but I forgot. Please go on, James. May he read, mamma?"

"Yes," said Mrs Melville; "I shall be very glad to hear him."

James read his story, without making many blunders; and after they had all talked a little about it, Kenneth said, "Mamma, may James and I go to get the pony saddled? He is out in the field with the cows. It is very difficult to catch him; he will let James and me catch him far sooner than George Fergusson."

"You may go," said his mamma; "and remember to ask George to put the side-

saddle on the pony, for Clara is to have a ride."

"And Mary and Bessie too!" said James.

"Did you ever ride at home, Clara?" said Kenneth.

"Not on a pony," said Clara, "but very often on a donkey."

"You will like the pony a great deal better," said Kenneth. "We had a donkey last year, and it was the most uncomfortable beast I ever knew. It used to take tantrums—Jessie always called them tantrums," continued Kenneth—"and sometimes it would not move. Then, at other times, it would set up its head in the air, and gallop—and such a dreadful gallop! But Donald is quite different; he is very good-tempered."

"Now," said Mrs Melville, as Kenneth stood discussing Donald's merits with the handle of the drawing-room door in his hand—"now make haste to catch Donald; we shall be ready very soon." The two boys ran off immediately.

After they had left the room, Mrs Mel-

ville looked at Clara's work, and shewed her where she had done wrong, and also shewed her how to amend. Clara stood at Mrs Melville's side for a short time, until she made some neater stitches, and then Mrs Melville dismissed them all to get ready for walking.

The bonnets and spencers were soon put on, and in a few minutes the whole party had assembled in front of the house, where Donald already stood engaged in eating oat-cakes and scones, with which the two younger boys were feeding him.

Donald was a very handsome Shetland pony, of a brown colour, very good-tempered, and quite suited to be a pony for children; for no amount of shouting was ever known to discompose his nerves, and he bore patiently the ill-judged but well-meant kindnesses with which his numerous masters and mistresses treated him. He was not so small as many Shetland ponies, so that Frank was not too heavy for him. He had not yet lost his winter coat, so that he was very rough; but in summer his hair became much more smooth.

"Now, Clara," said Kenneth, "you must mount, and James and I shall lead the pony."

A plaid supplied the place of a riding-skirt, and Clara was set on the pony. The two boys moved off slowly, holding Donald's bridle, and Mrs Melville, Mary, and Elizabeth, walked beside them. Clara was highly pleased with the pony, and pronounced him to be decidedly superior to her donkey.

They walked through the village, and passing along the bridge, turned up a road that wound among the hills. When Clara had ridden for some time, she got off the pony, and as both Elizabeth and Mary refused to ride, Kenneth and James had the pony to ride by turns, which they managed to do very well, even with the side-saddle, as they often rode without stirrups. Mrs Melville and the girls walked behind.

"Mamma, did you forget our French lesson to-day?" said Elizabeth.

"No," said her mamma; "but I did not wish to detain you this afternoon in order

to give it to you before we went out. Papa asked us to meet him, and as Monday is the day on which he has always most time to walk, I did not wish to disappoint him."

"Poor papa!" said Elizabeth; "he is always tired on Monday; he has to speak so much on Sunday. If I were papa, I would make shorter sermons."

"Papa does not consult his own ease in making his sermons," said Mrs Melville, "but the good of his people; and although papa is tired *in* working, he is not tired *of* working. I know some people who are very much disposed to get tired of their work sometimes, and would like to give it up; but that is not the way in which to do anything good or useful in this world. In order to do any good work, or be useful to our fellow-creatures in any way, we must persevere in what we undertake to do."

"Oh, mamma, you mean me," said Elizabeth; "but could I not learn to persevere when I am a woman, mamma?"

"Everything is best learned when one is young, Elizabeth. Youth is the time when the character is formed, very often,

both for time and for eternity. What we neglect to learn then, is either not learned at all, or painfully learned afterwards. You should be very thankful that you have parents who take pains to train you in God's fear, to teach you to subdue evil tempers, and get the better of bad habits. Many persons who have not enjoyed such advantages, have much trouble in after years in correcting those habits which might have been corrected much more easily in youth. This is what makes papa and me so anxious to correct all that is amiss in you; and I wish you all to remember that you can greatly assist us, by watching over yourselves, and by asking God to help you to do what is right."

"But, mamma, is it necessary for women to be as persevering as men?" said Mary.

"Quite as necessary," said her mamma. "Their duties, it is true, are entirely different, but this difference makes perseverance all the more necessary. The duties of men lie abroad in the world; almost every one sees what they do; and the certainty that

many people see them, makes perseverance in particular duties sometimes more easy than it would otherwise be.

"But the chief duties of women lie at home. Few people beyond the family circle know whether every duty is rightly discharged there or not, whether a woman is a faithful mother or a gentle sister, or a kind and considerate mistress. If it is necessary for a man to be persevering in all his duties, it must be quite as necessary for a woman. Only fancy what confusion would arise if a woman got tired of her duties even for a single day."

"Suppose you were to do so, mamma?" said Mary.

"Well, let us suppose," said Mrs Melville, "that I get tired of always doing the same thing, and that to-morrow I do not get up quite so early as usual. Of course, papa and you must arrange about breakfast. Then, in the forenoon, I leave Kenneth and James to their own devices. To-morrow is Tuesday. I ought to mend a good many small pairs of stockings; but I need not mind them for once; I have

done it so constantly for so many years. I daresay you may also manage to get some dinner without having me to order it; and in the afternoon we need have no lessons and no work."

"Oh! mamma, dear, what an uncomfortable day to-morrow would be!" said Elizabeth, laughing. "I hope you will never get tired of your duties. I do not know what we should do without you; everything would get into confusion."

"Unless some one took more than her own share of duty," said Mrs Melville. "One of the evils that arise from neglect of duty or perseverance in it is, that others are often burdened with more than their own share of work. When parents do not train their children properly, and do not teach them to control their tempers, then teachers have much more to do than they might have, or than they ought to have. And when children take no pains themselves to strive against what is wrong, parents and teachers have a much more difficult task than they would otherwise have. The same principle may be applied

to all duties whether small or great, to all persons, and all ages. If we neglect our duties, others must do them for us, in addition to their own, or they are left undone ; and neglected duties are always followed by sad consequences. If parents neglect to train their children properly, others must either do it for them, or these neglected children will, by their conduct in after life, fill the hearts of their parents with sorrow. If we neglect in youth to improve our minds, we lose time that no after diligence can fully make up ; if we neglect one small duty even for a single day, we give an additional duty to the morrow, which has always enough of its own."

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "I did not think that it was so wrong to neglect duties. I knew that it was very bad to do wrong things. I always knew that I was doing wrong when I got into a passion, or was disobedient to you ; but I never thought that it was wrong to put off doing things at the right time."

"You must have known that it was

very uncomfortable, at all events," said Mrs Melville; "for you have often been left at home when we went out to walk, because your lessons were not learned at the proper time."

"Ah, yes, mamma," said Elizabeth; "I felt unhappy at the time, and often resolved to be always regular in learning my lessons; but, somehow, when I had not been punished for a long time, I forgot again. I did not think that I was doing wrong. But Mary does not put off doing her duties."

"Not in the way of learning lessons," said her mamma; "but Mary will, I dare say, acknowledge that she is sometimes inclined to neglect duty in other matters. Sometimes our duties are neglected, because we do not see them to be duties, or feel them to be duties. That, however, is no excuse. We can see our duties if we only look about for them; and some of them scarcely require to be looked for, they are so directly before us. Yet remember, my dear little girls, that if we trust to ourselves for any duty, we shall

certainly fail. We need the continual help of the Holy Spirit, that we may learn to know our duties, and steadily and perseveringly fulfil them, even those duties that seem so small, and so unimportant, that we feel as if we needed no help to do them.

"I daresay, Clara, that you have not thought much about this?"

"No," said Clara; "but papa sometimes spoke to me about doing things at once, and not putting off, when nurse used to tell him about my being idle and careless."

"Then you will try, dear Clara, to remember what your papa said to you, and I hope you will try to be industrious and careful in doing everything at the right time, that your papa may feel both glad and surprised when he comes to see you."

"Mamma," said Kenneth, who was on the pony, "I think I see papa far on the road, coming down the hill; may I ride to meet him?"

"Yes, you may," said his mamma.

"May James come up behind me?" said Kenneth.

"Certainly not," said Mrs Melville; "did you not tell me lately that Donald would not allow two people to ride at once?"

"At least, mamma, he is not very fond of it," said Kenneth. "I fell off in the field last week when I went up behind James, and Frank said I was never to go up again; but I was not hurt."

"But you would be hurt if you fell off on this road, Kenneth," said his mamma; "so I do not wish James to ride along with you."

Kenneth set off to join his papa, and James walked along with his mamma and the three girls, until they met Mr Melville. They all turned and walked home. At the gate, Mrs Melville said, "Perhaps Clara would like to see your favourite burn. You can wander by the side of the burn for a few minutes, and then come in to tea; there will be time to prepare your lessons after tea."

"Come, Clara," said Elizabeth, "we shall have a nice ramble before tea."

"You can go without me," said Mary.

"We will go with you," said Kenneth

and James, "and shew Clara the place where our little cutter was wrecked last Monday."

The children set off to the burn, and rambled about for some time. Clara was taken across the burn at a place where the children had made a bridge of large stones, —a bridge that, on account of the many floods that happened in spring, required to be renewed once a fortnight. After wandering about for half-an-hour, gathering primroses and dog-violets, they heard the sound of a bell, and setting off, they arrived, breathless with haste, at the hall door, where they found Jessie waiting to remind them that hands must be washed and hair brushed before tea.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW evenings after this, Mr Melville came into the dining-room, where the girls were learning their lessons, with a letter in his hand. "I have something for you, Clara," he said.

"A letter!" said Clara, springing from her seat; "a letter from papa! How glad I am! Thank you," she continued, taking the letter from Mr Melville, and breaking the seal. She unfolded the letter, and endeavoured to read it; but Clara had not had much experience in reading letters, and although her papa had endeavoured to make his writing more distinct than usual, he had not succeeded to any great extent. After Mr Melville had left the room, Clara consulted her two companions with regard

every one else very much. There are two girls here, Mary and Elizabeth. Mary is the eldest; Elizabeth sleeps in my room, so that I speak to her a great deal oftener. They have three brothers, Frank, and Kenneth, and James. I like Kenneth and James very much.

“ You do not know what a beautiful place this is. The manse is not so large as our house, but it is very pretty, and there are a great many plants in front of the house. I have a garden; we have all gardens; and Mrs Melville has one too; we help her to weed it. I have begun to learn compound subtraction. I say my lessons to Mr Stewart along with Elizabeth; and Kenneth and James say their lessons to their mamma.

“ I had a drive in the dog-cart yesterday. Mr Melville took Mary, and Elizabeth, and me with him in the afternoon. He went to see an old lady, and she was very kind to us all. Good-bye, dear papa. I am trying to do what is right, and to please you, and God too.—Your affectionate

“ CLARA.”

When Clara had finished the letter to her papa, she asked Mrs Melville to rule a sheet of note-paper for her, and said that she would write a small note to nurse during her play-hours. As the forenoon was wet, the children could not go out; so, when they had finished their morning lessons, they all went up-stairs—Frank, Kenneth, and James to the nursery, where Frank kept his boat-making apparatus; while Mary, Elizabeth, and Clara went to the room in which Elizabeth and Clara slept.

"Surely you are not going to do any lessons?" said Elizabeth to Clara, when she saw her put her desk on the little table that stood in the middle of the room, and prepare to write.

"I am just going to write a little note to nurse," said Clara; "I shall not be long, for I am not going to be very particular."

"Do be quick, then," said Elizabeth; "it is almost as dull as being at lessons, to sit working here."

"Elizabeth," said Mary, "you have finished Kenneth's pocket-handkerchiefs. Mamma promised to give you wool for the

socks this forenoon ; you had better get it, and wind it."

Just at this moment Jessie appeared with one of Elizabeth's frocks hanging over her arm.

"Miss Elizabeth," she said, "I have just been down-stairs to your mamma to shew her this frock ; the way that it is torn is perfectly dreadful ; and it is not this frock only, but it's the same with almost everything you have ; you have scarcely a thing fit to put on. I told your mamma, what I said to you last week, that the next frock you tore you must mend yourself, and your mamma says that you must do it, so I have brought the frock to you. The tuck is pinned ready for sewing, and this is a nice wet forenoon — you'll have time to finish it before dinner."

"I am not going to mend that frock," said Elizabeth. "I think it was very unkind of you to go down telling mamma about a little tear in a frock, when you might have mended it yourself in five minutes."

"It was not altogether for the trouble

that I have myself that I spoke to your mamma," said Jessie; "I would not mind the mending of your frocks now and then; but the regardless way you go romping about, without thinking of your clothes, is very aggravating. There's Master Kenneth, although he is a boy, he is not half so much trouble as you are."

"No wonder," said Elizabeth; "Kenneth could not tear his clothes even if he tried; they are very different from mine. I wish you would mend my frock for once, Jessie."

"No, miss," said Jessie, laying the frock down on a chair; "your mamma said you were to mend it." So saying, Jessie left the room.

"Go away, then," said Elizabeth; "you are very cross. A nice wet forenoon!" she continued; "as if it were so very nice to stay in the house and mend tucks, after working all forenoon at lessons! I have a good mind not to mend this frock at all; at least I won't mend it till I see mamma."

"What are you about here, girls?" said Frank, who entered the room. "I wish

you would come and have a game at something or another."

"We are busy," said Mary, "and we cannot come."

"I might have expected that Miss Mary would say she was busy; she is always too busy to be very obliging. Let me help you," continued Frank, overturning the basket of wools she was arranging, and mixing all the shades together.

"You tiresome boy," said Mary; "these are mamma's wools, which she gave me to put in order; you should not have touched them. Now don't meddle with Clara, she is writing a letter."

"A letter!" said Frank; "I should like to see it."

"I don't wish you to see my letter," said Clara, reddening, and holding fast her note to nurse.

"Oh yes," said Frank, "I must see it;" and he endeavoured to force the letter from Clara's hands.

The tears rushed to Clara's eyes, but she held fast the letter. Elizabeth came to her assistance, and tried to hold Frank's

arms ; but he was too strong for her, and the struggle which had begun half in jest became serious, and finally ended in the destruction of the letter, and the overthrow of the ink-stand.

" See what you have done, Frank," said Mary, indignantly. " For shame ! Look how you have made Clara cry. Don't mind, Clara, dear," continued Mary ; " don't cry ; it was not your fault at all ; it was all Frank's fault ; he just delights to tease people, and to make them angry."

Frank had thought proper, in the meantime, to leave the room, without trying to repair in any way the mischief he had done. Elizabeth ran to the nursery for Jessie, who came and wiped up the ink, which, however, left a very dark stain on the carpet, that no washing could remove.

" This comes of romping," said Jessie ; " I daresay it was your fault, Miss Elizabeth."

" No," said Elizabeth, " it was not ; it was Frank who did it ; at least it was his fault ; he should not have tried to take Clara's letter from her."

After Jessie left the room, Clara said, "I cannot write another letter to-day; it is late, and my hand shakes so much. Let me help you, Mary, to put these wools right again."

"Thank you," said Mary; "I shall get on much faster with your help."

"Well," said Elizabeth, "since you two are busy, I cannot be idle. I think, after all, that I shall mend the frock, not because Jessie said I was to do it, but because I think it would please mamma if I were to do it; but, in case Frank comes back, I think I had better lock the door."

"I think so," said Mary, "and then we shall not be troubled with him."

The three little girls continued at their occupations until it was time to get ready for dinner. Just as they were laying aside their work, Mrs Melville came along the passage to their room, and tried to open the door. Elizabeth ran immediately to the door, and unlocked it. "How is it that you have the door locked?" said Mrs Melville, looking rather grave.

"It was to keep out Frank, mamma,"

said Mary ; " he was tormenting Clara, and he tore her letter, trying to force it from her, and overturned the inkstand."

" Frank did not intend to tear the letter," said Clara, looking up ; " he only wanted to see it ; but I did not wish him to see it ; so I held it fast, and I think it was torn between us. I can write the letter again. Will you not punish Frank ?"

" My dear little girl," said Mrs Melville, drawing Clara towards her, " I am glad to see that you don't feel angry with Frank. I am not going to punish him ; but we must ask papa to talk to Frank about his love of teasing, and I hope he will not again do anything to annoy you. I think he is very sorry that he has torn your letter, for he has been sitting beside me in the drawing-room for some time, looking very grave."

" I do not care very much about the letter," said Clara.

" It is a good thing that it was not your papa's letter, with which you took so much pains," said Mrs Melville ; " we must send it off to-night. Let me see your frock,

Elizabeth," continued her mamma; "is that frock lying on the chair the one you tore yesterday?"

"Yes, mamma," said Elizabeth; "but I have mended the tuck. I told Jessie that I would not do it; but I did it after she left the room, to please you, mamma," continued Elizabeth, "because I thought you would like me to do it."

"I am glad you mended it," said her mamma; "but I should have been much better pleased if you had done it at once, because it was right to do so. I should like you to remember that when you do what is right, it makes papa and me very happy; but I should not like you to do what is right only to please us. You should do it, no matter who tells you to do it."

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, "I will try to do so, and I will remember, too, that you will be pleased if I behave well. I am not going to tear my frocks so much as I have done."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Mrs Melville; "and I hope you may do as

you say, otherwise I must try the plan of making you mend the torn garments."

"I have finished arranging the wools for you, mamma," said Mary.

"Thank you, Mary," said her mamma. "Now I must ask you to put them away for me. Here is the key of the closet in my room. You may put the basket of wools on the first shelf in the closet, and bring the key again to me."

Mary executed her mamma's commission; and when she returned, they all went down-stairs.

When the girls had finished their afternoon lessons, they went with James and Kenneth to the garden. The weather had entirely cleared; and although it had rained all forenoon, the rain had been so soft, and had fallen in such small drops, that the ground was not very wet. Mary proposed that they should weed their gardens, to which proposal they all assented. The gardens had been freed from weeds but a few days before, and a little weeding with the hand soon cleared them this afternoon.

When they had finished weeding their gardens, the children went to George Fergusson, who was engaged in putting some cuttings of different plants into a hotbed that was at the upper end of the garden.

"Have you any room in the frame for another flower-pot, George?" said Elizabeth.

"Yes, miss," said George; "I daresay I could put in one or two."

"Then just wait for a minute," said Elizabeth, "till I ask mamma a question."

Elizabeth ran to the drawing-room window, and tapped on one of the panes. Her mamma came to the window.

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, breathless with haste and excitement, "may we have one or two cuttings from your double wall-flowers? George will give us a pot, and put it into the frame; he is at the hotbed this afternoon."

"Yes, you may have some cuttings," said her mamma; "but do not take them yourself; ask George to cut them for you."

"Thank you, mamma," said Elizabeth. She returned to the rest of the children

with the welcome news that they might have some cuttings. Kenneth and James said that they did not care very much for double wall-flowers, so George promised to give them each a large flourishing plant of the common yellow wall-flower.

"I wish you would give us some plants, George, that will have a great many flowers on them," said Kenneth. "We like to give flowers to mamma, and our mignonette lasted longer than hers last year."

"I'll do that," said George.

"There is papa, Kenneth," said James, "at the end of the middle walk; let us take a run to meet him;" and the two little boys set off side by side. When they reached their papa, he told them that he was going to take a walk, and that they might come with him if they chose.

"Will you wait for us, papa," said Kenneth, "till we wash our hands, and put away our wheel-barrows?"

"Yes," said their papa, "you will find me here."

The boys soon returned, and set out with their papa.

"Where are you going, papa?" said James.

"We shall first call at Mr Stewart's for Frank; I think he must have finished his lessons this afternoon; it is now half-past four o'clock."

"And after that, papa?"

"I am going to see a young man who is ill, Kenneth. He lives about a mile from the village."

"May we see him, papa?" said James.

"I think not, my dear boy," said his papa; "he is too ill to be disturbed."

"Look, papa," said Kenneth, "there is Frank with his books."

"Run forward, Kenneth," said his papa, "and tell Frank to go back with his books, and leave them at Mr Stewart's until we return."

Frank went back, and left his books, and soon joined his papa and brothers. They did not enter the village, but pursued the road that passed the gate of the manse. They left it in a short time to walk along a cart-road that led to several farms. The road was bordered by early

spring flowers. The young leaves of the birch-tree were unfolding themselves—the wild rose bushes were glittering with the drops that hung on every leaf and spray—and the air was filled with odours from the birch-trees and sweetbrier bushes.

“Papa, how beautiful everything is!” said Kenneth, “and what a sweet smell there is! What makes everything look so much better to-day than yesterday?”

“It is the rain, Kenneth,” said his papa. “You know who sends the rain? In one of the Psalms we are told to praise the Lord, ‘who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.’ If we had no rain, how dry and scorched everything would become! so that we must thank God not only for the bright sun that warms the earth, but also for the soft rain that sinks into the earth, and makes everything so green and beautiful.”

“Oh, papa,” said James, “look at these little lambs in that park, how they run

about, how merry they are! There are three running a race; and now they are all turning round; and there they are—jumping quite off the ground.”

“They are very happy, James,” said his papa: “how pure and white their fleece is! Do you see that man walking across the field with a lamb in his arms?”

“Yes, papa; what is he going to do with it?”

“Perhaps the lamb is not strong enough to remain out in the field, so the shepherd will take it home, and keep it in the house until it is stronger. Do you remember who is called the Good Shepherd?”

“Yes, papa,” said Kenneth, “it is the Lord Jesus Christ. Mamma taught James and me the verse that says, ‘He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.’”

“And you know who are His lambs?” said Mr Melville.

“Yes, papa,” said James—“children that love the Lord Jesus are His lambs.”

“Then, dear boys, you must ask Jesus to make you His lambs, to give you a new

heart, and teach you to love Him. God loves to hear the prayers of little children; and although the Lord Jesus is now in heaven, He can see you and bless you; you cannot feel His gracious hands laid on you, as when He blessed the children that were brought to Him when He was upon earth; but if you pray to Him, and love Him, and seek to please Him, He will take care of you continually, and you will dwell with Him for ever in heaven. Now, I should like you two little boys to walk on alone for a short time; I am going to speak to Frank for a few minutes. You may walk at my side afterwards."

"We shall go and look for a new flower for mamma," said Kenneth.

"Very well," said his papa.

"Frank," said Mr Melville, "I must talk to you for a few minutes with regard to something in your conduct about which we had a conversation some time ago. I am sorry to find that you still indulge your love of teasing your sisters, that you still try to irritate them, and that you are still apparently resolved that your mother and

I shall have more trouble with you all than we ought to have."

"Papa," said Frank, "I never try to give you and mamma trouble; you know I would not do such a thing."

"Then what am I to think, Frank," said Mr Melville, "of the conduct you so often pursue? If you do not wish to grieve mamma and me, do you tease your sisters because you like to see them out of temper?"

"But if Elizabeth did not so easily get out of temper, I don't think I would ever laugh at her or tease her, papa."

"Is it to help her to conquer her disposition to be angry that you laugh at her?"

"No, papa; oh, no," said Frank, reddening. "I know I am often wrong," he continued, "and I feel it at the time; but somehow, when I begin I cannot stop."

"But you must learn to stop, or rather never to begin, Frank," said Mr Melville; "and I hope that to-day you will resolve, in God's strength, no longer to take delight in making your sisters unhappy, and leading them to sin against God. If one of your sisters is easily irritated, should

you not, as a kind brother, help her to overcome what is evil? What would you say of a man who went about constantly trying to make his fellow-creatures stumble; sometimes putting a large stone in the way of a blind man, or pulling away a crutch from one who was lame? Should you not think his conduct worthy of the deepest abhorrence? Then, my dear boy, what shall we say of those who place stumbling-blocks in the way of others, leading them to sin?

"I am sure you would not lift your hand to strike your sisters; but do you never consider your unkind jesting hurts their minds? Even to-day, what discomfort and annoyance you caused, by what I suppose you considered amusement! I do not mean entirely to justify your sisters, for certainly they are not obliged to get angry with you; but I do think that many angry feelings, and all such unseemly struggling as we had this forenoon, might be avoided, if you would only give up your habit of playing practical jests, and annoying your sisters; and, Frank, you must endeavour to give it up."

"I will try, papa," said Frank. "I know that it is wrong to behave as I often do, and I don't feel happy; sometimes I feel very sorry when we have a quarrel; and I really did not mean to tear the letter, or to torment Clara at all; but when things come into my mind, I feel as if I must say them."

"Things that appear amusing to you," said Mr Melville—"words that make all laugh except the person to whom you address them. Well, Frank, you are not the only person in the world who feels in that manner. There are many grown persons who appear to derive great amusement from jesting with the sins, the weaknesses, and the bodily infirmities of their fellow-creatures, and by long practice, and some degree of cleverness, they speak of them in what seems to be a very amusing manner to all except the unhappy person who is the subject of the jest."

"Papa," said Frank, "I never would do so."

"Everything has a beginning, Frank, and you have made the beginning already.

Let us try to undo it as speedily as possible. A person who is continually laughing at others, can neither feel proper affection for any one, nor can he be loved himself as he must otherwise be. I dare say you feel the truth of what I have said, for I am sure that you see that neither Mary nor Elizabeth tell you as many of their little plans as they used to do; they are afraid of being teased and laughed at; besides, they have lost confidence in your affection."

"They might know that I loved them, papa," said Frank.

"I am not sure of that," said his papa. "I do not think that I should myself like to talk much to any one who was constantly jesting; nor could I feel much friendship for any one who did all he could to irritate and torment me. So, my dear boy, if you wish your sisters and Clara to love you, and confide in you, you must yourself be loving and kind. The young die as well as the old, Frank; yet it is most probable that your mother and I will be taken away before you, and think

what a comfort it would be to us if we could feel that our dear children loved each other as God intended brothers and sisters to love. Family love is that three-fold cord which is not easily broken, and very pleasant it is when our friends are those of our own household. God intended that it should be so, and something must be wrong when the members of one family do not feel proper affection for each other. Besides, Frank, your conduct is not only very grievous to your mother and me, and annoying to your sisters—it is highly displeasing in God's sight. God appoints our station in life, and our various duties. He has made you eldest in this family, and one of your duties is to set a good example to your brothers and sisters. You have no idea yet, my dear boy, how much influence for good or evil the eldest of a family has. It is an influence so tremendous, that it brings with it a fearful responsibility. You must ask the Lord, Frank, to make you understand this influence, and teach you to use it properly. Amongst the many talents that God gives

us to use for Him, our influence over others is one of the most important, and one for the use of which we shall be strictly made to account. It is very important that we should understand this, for we are too apt to think that our actions only concern ourselves, while there is scarcely a thing that we do or say that does not, in some degree or another, influence a fellow-creature."

"I never thought of that," said Frank.

"I am afraid not," said his papa; "but you must begin to think of it now, and act accordingly. Yet remember, Frank, you are not required to do anything in your own strength. There is One who condescends to call Himself our Elder Brother. For His people He purchased a rich inheritance with His own blood, and He feels for them love as much greater than that of an earthly brother, as the heaven is higher than the earth. You must go to Him, Frank. Ask Him to make you one of His people, to give you his Holy Spirit, to teach you to use all your influence for Him. It is a noble

thing to be working for God; it makes the least action of our lives important. May it be your aim throughout life, my dear boy, to work for God."

"Well, papa," said Frank, "I will think of what you have said. I will begin to try to get the better of these bad habits; but perhaps I shall not be able to do it all at once."

"Perhaps not," said Mr Melville; "but you can begin to try, and each day the struggle will become easier. Do not, however, trust to yourself. We are never more likely to fail than when we trust to ourselves, nor more likely to succeed than when we put our trust in the Lord."

"Papa," said Kenneth, running to Mr Melville with a handful of wild flowers, "are you not going to see that poor young man that you told us of? We have passed the house."

"So I see," said his papa. "Frank and I were so busy talking, that I did not perceive that we had passed it. You had better walk on for a short time, and then

you may return here, and wait for me."

In about half an hour Mr Melville joined the boys, and walked home with them. Near the entrance to the village they met Mrs Melville and the girls. Frank went up directly to Clara, and said, "I am very sorry I teased you to-day, and I promise you that I shall not do so again."

"Not till the next time," said Elizabeth.

"Hush, my little girl," said her papa; "that is not a kind remark to make when a brother acknowledges a fault. I hope Frank will soon get rid of his love of teasing, and as we are talking of amendment at present, I daresay you may perhaps find something in yourself that may require a little correction."

"More than one thing, I am sure," said Mrs Melville; "but don't look so grave, Elizabeth, we are not going to discuss this subject at present."

"May we remain out a little longer, mamma?" said Kenneth.

"Your lessons are not prepared for to-morrow," said his mother.

"I can learn them in half an hour, mamma."

"Not properly, Kenneth; the lessons must be attended to in good time. Go in with your sisters and brothers, and learn your lessons; and if you are industrious, you may have time for a short run in the garden before going to bed. Set off quickly," continued Mrs Melville, kindly, as her little boy turned with slow unwilling steps to the manse gate. "Papa and I are going to visit a poor woman in the village. We shall very soon follow you. Let us see how many lessons can be thoroughly prepared before we return."

Kenneth's face brightened, the slow step changed into a quick run; and before his papa and mamma returned from the village, a difficult lesson in geography—his worst lesson, as it was usually designated—was mastered.

CHAPTER VII.

THINGS went on for a few days at Inver-allan Manse much as they usually did. The morning, and part of the afternoon, were spent in study ; yet there still remained hours to wander by the burnside, to climb the hills, or to enjoy pleasant expeditions to favourite spots, which Clara learned to love as dearly as her young companions did. The afternoon walk was often directed to some cottage where a sick child or an aged and infirm person was the object of the visit. Many a little delicacy was carried by the children to tempt the appetite of an invalid ; and Mrs Melville encouraged in her children the habit of denying themselves any small gratification, that they might have something to give to a sick person. —

It happened one evening that there was some sweet-cake at tea. All the children had some; but James, instead of eating his portion, laid it by the side of his plate, and continued to eat bread and butter.

"First done helps his neighbour," said Frank, stretching across Clara to reach James's plate.

"Don't touch the cake, Frank," said James.

"Why not?" said Frank; "if you are not going to eat your cake, you had better bestow it on me. I am very fond of cake, if you are not."

"I like this sort of cake very much," said James, quietly.

"What a stupid fellow you must be not to eat it!" said Frank. "Mother, do you understand him?"

"I think I do, Frank," said Mrs Melville; "so we need not question him. I feel quite sure that James is not going to make a bad use of his cake." James looked at his mamma, and smiled. After tea, he asked for a piece of paper, and

wrapping his precious cake in it, carried it up-stairs.

Next day, when lessons were finished, Kenneth and James asked their mother if they might go to see little Mary Fraser. "If you have anything to send to her, mamma," said Kenneth, "James and I can take it."

"I am afraid, my dear boys," said Mrs Melville, "that I cannot go with you to-day, and I cannot send Jessie with you, for she is busy."

"What shall we do?" said James.

"Wait until to-morrow," said his mamma; "I daresay I shall be able to go with you then."

"I have something else to ask, mamma," said Kenneth; "but I shall come back directly;" and he ran out of the room.

In a few minutes he returned. "May we go with Mr Stewart, mamma?" he said.

"Very probably Mr Stewart is busy, and I am sure he has had enough of you for one day," said Mrs Melville.

"He is not at all busy, mamma. I asked him, and he says he should like to go. I am sure the walk will do him a great deal of good," continued Kenneth.

"If Mr Stewart can be troubled with you, I shall be most happy to let you go under his care," said Mrs Melville. "I shall give you some arrow-root for Mary Fraser; and papa, I think, has a little book for her."

Kenneth and James went up-stairs, and when they returned, each was carrying a small basket. The arrow-root was given to one, the little book to the other; and, with happy faces, the little brothers set out to call on Mr Stewart, and walk with him to the cottage of Mary Fraser's mother.

They found Mr Stewart waiting for them at the door of the house where he resided. "Will you walk across the moor, Mr Stewart?" said James; "it is so very nice to run among the heather. Shall we find any in flower?"

"Not yet, I think," said Mr Stewart; "but we can walk across the moor, if you wish."

It was a lovely afternoon. The sky was blue, with scarcely a cloud; and the air, pure and fresh, had the peculiarly delightful feeling that early summer alone can give. Across the heath ground, designated the moor, there were several narrow paths, one of which led to Mary Fraser's cottage, which stood at the foot of one of the hills near Inverallan. A walk, or rather scamper, of half an hour, brought Mr Stewart and the two boys to the cottage; not that half an hour was required to take them straight across the moor, but James and Kenneth found so many objects of interest on their way, that they were constantly turning aside from the path to examine something or another; and in one of these delays the arrow-root was laid down, and forgotten, until they had walked on for a few minutes, so that some time was consumed in looking for it.

When they arrived at the cottage, they found Mrs Fraser laying down some clothes on the grass near the little burn that ran past her dwelling. She left off her occupation directly, and, drying her hands on

her apron, came forward to meet Mr Stewart and the children. "How are you, sir?" she said. "Weel, but I'm glad to see that ye can walk so far. Ye maun be keepin' better? And oh but I'm glad to see you," continued Mrs Fraser, clapping the two boys on the shoulder; "bonnie bairns that ye are, and kind too, to come sae far to speer for Mary!"

"How is she this afternoon?" said Mr Stewart.

"Weel, sir, it's no easy for me to say. She just keeps aye about the same; but she's aye contented, and that's a great matter. She lies and reads the books that the minister brings to her, for Mary's a fine reader; and many a time, when I'll be sitting and working beside her, she'll read something to me."

"Papa gave us a little book for Mary this afternoon," said Kenneth, "and here is some arrow-root from mamma."

"Ye maun tell your papa and mamma that I'm very much obliged to them, and so is Mary. You see, sir," continued Mrs

Fraser, turning to Mr Stewart, "when a body's delicate, they'll no care for porridge, and the minister and Mrs Melville are aye sae kind in sending things for Mary."

They now entered the house, and found the little girl whom they had come to see in the inner room of the cottage, which was beautifully clean. She was lying on a small sofa bed near the window. This bed was the gift of some kind friends in the parish, who thought that it would be more pleasant for Mary to lie near the window, than in the dark bed in the wall, in which she had spent the first few months of her illness. Her disease had lately been pronounced to be incurable spine complaint; and although, from one day to another, her mother might not perceive much difference in her appearance, yet she was gradually losing strength, and drawing near to death.

They found her with her Bible beside her, and some little books, one of which she had just finished reading.

"Are you better to-day, Mary?" said Kenneth.

"Not much better," said Mary; "indeed I think that I am never to be better in this world."

"Don't say that," said James; "I hope you will soon be better. Look here," continued he, "here is some cake and figs for you, and Kenneth has some more cake and two oranges. Just taste this;" and James pressed a bit of cake to Mary's lips.

"Gently, my dear boy," said Mr Stewart.

Mary looked at her two kind young friends, and then, raising her eyes to Mr Stewart's face, she said, "I'm thinking, sir, that they bring me the things that they get to eat themselves."

"And if they do," said Mr Stewart, "I am sure they feel much more pleasure in giving them to you, and in seeing that you like them, than they would have if they kept them all to themselves. They would feel very sorry if you did not take their little gifts."

"Oh, Mary, you must take these things," said Kenneth; "we don't care for figs and oranges—at least," he added, correcting himself, "not very much; and

we like very much to bring them to you, because," he continued, in a confidential tone of voice, "the doctor says that none of these things will do you the least harm, and I daresay you like them."

"Blessings on the bairns," said Mrs Fraser, "they're just like their papa; they'll be ministers themselves some day."

Kenneth and James put the contents of their baskets on the table that stood in the middle of the room. They gave Mary then some wild flowers, which they had gathered on their way to the cottage.

"Are not these pretty, Mary?" said James.

"Very pretty," said Mary; "my mother often brings in flowers to me. I like to look at them, and think of Him that made them. It is a curious thing, sir," she continued, turning to Mr Stewart, "but you'll sometimes find the bonniest flowers growing in lone places, where there's no a body to look at them, but maybe a shepherd now and then passing on the hills. Far up the burn here, where the water is as clear as glass, there are flowers growing

sae blue, that the very grass shines as if it were the sky. Sometimes, when I begin to fret about being such a poor useless creature lying here, and not able to do a turn either for mysel' or for any other body, I think of the bonnie wee flowers on the hill-side; and then I mind, that if God cares for the little flowers, He will care for me too."

"You must not think that you are a poor useless creature, Mary," said Mr Stewart, "even although you are not able to do anything with your hands for God. We must remember that God does not need our labour for Him. It is our duty to work for Him, for all that we have is His, and should be given up to Him; but He can well do without our labour, for a loök from Him would do what the whole world working together could never accomplish; and you may do as much for God on your sick-bed, perhaps even more, than you could have done if He had given you health."

"How is that, sir?" said Mary.

"You may shew to others an example of patience and submission; and when they see that God can make you not only quiet,

but happy on a sick-bed, they may learn to seek God for themselves; for although we may do much good in speaking for God, there is nothing like being a living epistle, shewing in our own lives how much God has done for us. You are not sorry that the Lord has afflicted you?"

"Oh no, no, sir," said Mary; "I was only sorry because I thought I was useless here; but I'll no think that any more; and I would far rather be lying here, with God for my Father, than able to run about as I used to do, and never thinking about Him. I knew nothing about the Lord Jesus till I was ill, and I may well be thankful to Him for His mercy to me."

"Have you read many of the little books, Mary?" said Kenneth.

"Yes," said Mary, "I have read a good many of them, and they are very nice little books; but I like the Bible best."

"So you should, Mary," said Mr Stewart; "we should never let any books, however nice, come between us and the Bible. Should you like me to read a chapter to you?"

"If you please, sir," said Mary.

Mr Stewart read the tenth chapter of St John, and having spoken to Mary for a short time about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, he prayed with her. The boys and he then bid good-bye to Mrs Fraser and Mary, and set out on their way home.

They had not proceeded far across the moor, when they perceived at some distance Frank with his sisters and Clara Stanley. Clara was riding, and the others walking. The two parties soon met.

"Where are you going?" said Kenneth to Frank.

"Nowhere," said Frank; "we set out to meet Mr Stewart and you, and now that we have met you, I suppose we shall return with you."

"Did you see Mary Fraser?" said Elizabeth.

"Yes," said Kenneth, "and she says that she does not think that she will ever get better. But her mother did not say that; she said that Mary was always the same; and I daresay she will get better; don't you think so, Mr Stewart?"

"No, Kenneth," said Mr Stewart, "I am afraid that Mary will never get better. Mrs Fraser sees her little girl so constantly, that she does not notice the change that is passing over her. Do not you see that Mary is much thinner and more pale than she was some time ago?"

"Yes," said Kenneth; "but I think that is because she does not go out. Mamma was quite as thin and pale last year, and you see she is quite well now; and you used to be very pale when you came here, and now you are quite different."

"Yes, my dear boy, I am," said Mr Stewart; "but the illness that Mary Fraser has, is one from which people rarely recover when it is far advanced."

"But we may ask God to make her better," said James, "and perhaps He will. It is not wrong to ask God to make people well?"

"Not if we pray in a spirit of submission to His will," said Mr Stewart. "We must remember that God knows what is best both for us and for our

friends; and sometimes He thinks fit to deny our requests, for we are so blind and ignorant, that very often we wish for what would really do us harm."

"Then, when we ask God to make any one better, or to give us something, we must say, 'If it be thy will,'" said Kenneth.

"Yes," said Mr Stewart; "not only say it, but feel it. It is very easy to use words, and even to think that we shall be contented if God should deny our requests, but it is not easy really to feel submissive. We need the help of the Holy Spirit before we can feel satisfied with all that God gives to us or keeps from us. I am afraid this is too difficult a subject for you. I daresay your sisters and Frank understand me better."

"I understand what you mean, quite well, Mr Stewart," said Kenneth.

"You are all too young," said Mr Stewart, "to do more than understand what I am saying to you. You cannot yet confirm it from your own experience; but, if God should spare you to live long,

you will find that God denies us many things, sometimes because the things in themselves are wrong, sometimes because, although they are right enough in themselves, yet He sees that they would take away our hearts from Him."

"I have been thinking about Mary Fraser," said Elizabeth. "Don't you think, Mr Stewart, that she really loves God?"

"I do indeed," said Mr Stewart; "I think she is one of God's own children."

"Then don't you wonder, since she is one of God's children, that God lets her lie so long, for so many months in great pain; and that He does not make her better, or take her to heaven at once?"

"Elizabeth, what a strange question!" said Mary.

"Not a strange question, but a very natural question for a little girl to put," said Mr Stewart. "I must try to make you understand why God's children are sometimes more severely afflicted than worldly people. Suppose that a father in walking along the road should see his

son engaged in fighting with some other boys, what would he do?"

"He would take his son home," said Elizabeth, "and speak to him, and perhaps punish him."

"Are you sure he would do so?" said Mr Stewart; "would he not rather take one of the other boys, and try to cure him of the love of fighting?"

"No, no," said Elizabeth; "you know a father alway takes most pains with his own children. Although papa talks to the children in the village, he does not punish them, he only punishes us."

"And in the same way," said Mr Stewart, "God, the heavenly Father, takes most pains with His own children. A father often deprives his children of some indulgence because he perceives that it would not be good for them, or because he sees that, by taking it away, he can help them to overcome what is wrong. God, our Father in heaven, often takes away from His children the things that they best love in this world, sometimes because He sees that these things are

really doing them harm, or because He wishes to help them to overcome what is evil in their hearts.

“When a father punishes his child, it is not because he is angry with him; he is grieved on account of the sin which his child has committed, and, because he dearly loves his child, he punishes him that he may not again commit the same fault. It is true deep love that makes earthly parents correct their children; and it is love of which we can understand but little, that makes God chastise His own children.”

“I know,” said Mary, “that mamma and papa are always so sorry when they are obliged to punish any of us. I have seen tears in mamma’s eyes, and papa looks very grave.”

“Then, if correction is so necessary that parents who fear God use it, although with much sorrow to themselves, we cannot suppose that God will train His children for heaven without sending affliction sometimes, to remind them of their duty. Now, one question. Can any one among

you tell me when he or she behaves most carefully, watches over conduct most unweariedly, and in everything does most to please papa and mamma?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Elizabeth.

"I know what I feel," said Frank; "I think it is after papa or mamma has spoken to me about some fault, and perhaps punished me. Not perhaps immediately after," added Frank, "for sometimes I feel a little angry at first, but after I feel sorry for the fault."

"It is just the same with me," said Mary.

"And with me," added Elizabeth; "but I did not think of it when you asked us."

"And do you know when I love mamma best?" said Kenneth. "I always love her very much, but I think I love her best after I have been naughty—I mean, when she has punished me besides."

"And do you know the reason of that, my dear little boy?" said Mr Stewart.

"No," said Kenneth; "can you tell me?"

"I think I can," said Mr Stewart. "You must know that correction of itself has no power to soften the heart; but correction accompanied with love is very different. If, instead of talking gently to you, and praying with you, I were to whip you, or lock you into a room without speaking to you at all, would you love me?"

"I don't think I would," said Kenneth.

"I am sure I would not," said James.

"I daresay not," said Mr Stewart.

"But when your mamma talks sorrowfully and gently to you about a fault, and after praying with you, inflicts some correction, such as not allowing you to come downstairs, or perhaps something else, you cannot help feeling that it is love for you, and earnest desire for your good, that makes your mamma punish you at all. Such loving punishment has a great tendency to soften the heart, and make it tender and submissive; and, although you may not really love your mamma more at such times, yet you think more of your mamma, and are thus more conscious of your love for her."

"And is it the same with God's children?" said Clara."

"The very same," said Mr Stewart. "Let us sit down for a few minutes on this bank, and I will tell you what some of God's children have said with regard to correction."

The children all sat down, and Mr Stewart took a small Bible from his pocket, and marked two or three passages.

"We find from the prophet Hosea," said Mr Stewart, "that God sends affliction to recall His people to their duty, and to make them sensible of their sins. God says, speaking of the Israelites, 'I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.' And in the passage that follows, we find that the purpose for which God sent the affliction was accomplished, for we read, that God's people said, 'Come, and let us return to the Lord.'"

"In the 119th Psalm, the Psalmist speaks frequently of the benefits that he himself had derived from affliction. In

one place, he says, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.' And in another, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.'

"I think we must read this Psalm in portions in the morning before beginning our studies, instead of the portion of Scripture we are reading at present, and we shall notice together how often the writer of the Psalm speaks of his afflictions as having made him more anxious to serve God, and more loving towards his heavenly Father."

"Just as I felt to mamma?" said Kenneth.

"Yes, my dear boy," said Mr Stewart.

"Then are worldly people ever afflicted at all?" said Mary.

"Oh yes," said Mr Stewart; "God does many things to bring sinners to Himself. Sometimes He sends prosperity; gives them health, and friends, and riches, that they may seek Him who is so good to them; and sometimes He sends affliction; deprives them of health, that they may think of the great Physician—of friends, that they may

seek Christ, who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother—and of riches, that they may think of treasure in heaven. It was in this way that Mary Fraser was led to seek God. Before she lost her health, she was as careless about her soul as many children are, but it pleased the Holy Spirit to bless her affliction, and lead her to God.

“ Affliction is not a pleasant thing in itself, but it may, with God’s blessing, do much good. Think how good God is, to try so many things to make us love Him and seek Him. Try sometimes to count some of your mercies, and then ask the Holy Spirit to bless these mercies to you, that your hearts may be led to seek God. Think how short life is at the longest, and to some, how very short it is indeed ; and do not waste in trifles the time that was given you to prepare for heaven. Look at those hills. For thousands of years they have stood, and the summer sun has smiled on them, and the winter storm swept over them. That glorious blue sky has looked down upon thousands of human beings

who are now mouldering in their graves. A time, however, is coming when 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.'

"But while we look on the earth and sky, and remember that they must pass away, let us also remember, that all who ever lived on this earth, from the time that Adam walked alone upon the earth till the time in which the Lord Jesus shall come to judge the world, must stand before God. And when earth and sea and skies have passed away, and all the works of man have perished, every man, woman, and child, that ever lived, shall still be alive, and either eternally happy with Christ in heaven, or eternally miserable. For the soul cannot perish. It may be lost—it may be ruined, but it must always exist.

"And now, my dear children, let me ask you to think of what we have been talking this afternoon. Remember what a privilege it is to be allowed to call God our father—God, the King of heaven. Think

of the safety and happiness of those who are His children—of all that He has done, in sending His own dear Son to die for us, and in promising us the help of the Holy Spirit. Think of all this, and pray for the Holy Spirit, and surely you will love God. You know St John says, ‘ We love Him, because He first loved us.’

“ Now, I must bid you good-bye, for we are close to the village. You will not forget what I have been saying to you ?”

“ No, we will not,” said the children.
“ Good-bye, Mr Stewart.”

CHAPTER VIII.

WEEKS passed in the regular employments of Inverallan Manse. May came bringing leaves for the trees, and beautiful verdure alike for field and glen—and when that month of sunshine and blue skies had departed, June appeared, if not actually in those northern regions crowned with roses, yet so fresh, so green, so beautiful, that Clara fancied she had never before known such a lovely summer. Besides, although June was not ushered in with roses, the roses followed in her train, and very soon the manse garden was glowing with beauty. All the dear old-fashioned flowers that seem almost entirely vanished from some modern gardens, or when allowed to remain are consigned to a corner, were there.

Rich, deep pink roses, whose names, if they possess any, are seldom heard, filled the air with fragrance. Honeysuckle, seringa, laburnum, rich double wallflower, and stocks, pinks, mignonette, sweet-peas, and a variety of other flowers, filled the garden. At the end of the middle walk there was an arbour of trellis-work, thickly covered with honeysuckle, jessamine, and climbing roses; and there in the afternoon the girls often sat and worked while Mrs Melville read to them, or talked to them about some of the beautiful objects around. Except when with her papa, Clara had never had her mind much directed to the things around her, and now new sources of instruction and happiness were opened. But amidst all the happiness she experienced at Inverallan, a new want was arising in her mind, the deep consciousness of a loss which she had never felt to any extent before. When her mother died, Clara was too young to know her loss, and constantly with her father, who was devotedly attached to his child, she had

all that she wished for in him. Until her visit to Inverallan, she had never been brought closely in contact with the home life of any loving family; and now, day by day, there arose in her heart the deep, longing desire that she too had a mother. It is true that Mrs Melville was very kind to her, and also true that Clara deeply felt her kindness; but when she heard the children say mamma, and saw them carry all their little joys and sorrows to that kind mother, she began to wish that she had some one who would be to her all that Mrs Melville was to her children. The wish once formed, grew daily stronger and stronger, and at times was so painfully strong, that Clara was obliged to weep for relief. Two or three times Mrs Melville had noticed the traces of tears on Clara's cheeks, but had abstained from saying anything, thinking that perhaps some little temporary disagreement between her and Elizabeth had caused them. One evening, however, when looking at the children asleep before going to her own room, Mrs Melville saw

that Clara's eyelids were much swollen, and heard her sobbing in her sleep. "There must be something the matter with that child," thought Mrs Melville. "I must speak to her to-morrow."

Mary called to her mamma from the little inner room, and when her mamma went to her, said, "Mamma, Clara has been crying; what can be the matter with her? I got up and spoke to her, but she would not tell me. I have two or three times heard her crying after she has gone to bed."

"Has any one been unkind to Clara?" said Mrs Melville; "has Elizabeth quarrelled with her?"

"No, mamma," said Mary, "we have had no quarrels; I don't think that Elizabeth and Clara ever quarrel."

"Perhaps Clara will tell me to-morrow what is vexing her," said Mrs Melville. "In the meantime do not say anything to her about it. Now good-night, dear, and try to sleep; it is past eleven o'clock."

"Good-night, dear mamma."

Next forenoon Clara wrote a letter to

her papa, and when she had finished, as the others had not left Mr Stewart, Mrs Melville proposed that Clara and she should take a turn in the garden. It was a forenoon of bright sunshine, after heavy showers. Every spray was hung with trembling rain-drops, every rose was glittering with moisture, and the air was filled with a compound of the most delicious odours.

"Shall we gather some flowers for the drawing-room?" said Clara; "I heard you say last night that you wished to have the glasses filled."

"We must wait for a few hours until the bushes and shrubs are dry," said Mrs Melville; "we should get ourselves made very damp at present."

"May I help to gather them in the afternoon?" continued Clara; "I know the roses that we must gather—those that have not a great many little buds on the same stalk."

"Yes, my dear, you may gather them. But now, dear Clara," continued Mrs Melville, "you must not wonder if I ask

you what grieves you so much. I have noticed two, or three times, lately, that you had been crying, and last night I heard you sobbing in your sleep. I was afraid that my little girls had been unkind to you, but I find it is not so. Tell me, dear, what it is that grieves you; I cannot bear to think that you are unhappy."

"I am not always unhappy, only sometimes," said Clara; her eyes filling with tears.

"But what makes you unhappy sometimes?"

"Because, because, oh! dear Mrs Melville," said Clara, throwing her arms round her, and bursting into a fit of weeping; "it is because I have no mother. Why did God take away mamma?"

"My dear, dear little girl," said Mrs Melville, "is it thinking about your mamma that makes you so sad? Come into the arbour with me, and we will talk a little."

Mrs Melville sat down, and taking Clara on her lap, the motherless child

threw her arms round her neck, and wept passionately. "Clara, dear, listen to me," said Mrs Melville; "I knew your mamma."

"Did you?" said Clara, lifting her head; "ah! yes, I remember that papa said you did."

"Shall I tell you something about your mamma?" continued Mrs Melville.

Clara lifted her head entirely, dried her eyes, and prepared to listen.

"Your mamma had no sisters," said Mrs Melville, "neither had I; and as we became acquainted when mere children, we grew up to be sisters to each other. I loved your mamma very much, and when Frank was a baby, she came here and stayed with me for many months. We used often to walk in the garden."

"This very garden?" said Clara.

"This very garden," continued Mrs Melville. "The trees and shrubs were not so large then as they are now, but still many of them were growing then, and many of the shrubs your mamma helped to plant."

"Tell me something more," said Clara.

"Every one loved your mamma, for she was gentle, and kind, and amiable; and the reason that she was so gentle, and kind, and amiable, was, that she loved God. She loved God more than she loved father or mother or any one else. You know, dear Clara, that before we can hope to go to heaven, we must have our sins forgiven, and have our hearts changed by the Holy Spirit. A great many people know this who never think of it. But your dear mamma thought of it. She sought the Saviour, and found Him. She sought to have her heart changed by God's Holy Spirit, and God the Holy Spirit heard her, and changed her heart. She asked God to be her Father, and the Lord heard her and made her His child.

"Now, if a letter were to come from your papa to-night, to tell you to go home, would you be glad to go?"

"Yes," said Clara.

"Would you not be sorry to leave us?" said Mrs Melville.

"Yes," said Clara, "I would be sorry

to leave you, but I should be more glad to see papa."

"Just so it was when your mamma was sent for by her heavenly Father. Although she loved your papa and you very much, she loved Jesus Christ more."

"How did God send for her?" said Clara.

"Your mamma had a long illness; she knew that God sent it. The doctors could do her no good, for God was going to take His child home."

"To heaven?" said Clara.

"Yes, to heaven, my darling. Your mamma is there now, and will be there for ever. And, just as you have a papa on earth, although you cannot at this moment see him, because separated from him by distance, as certainly you have a mamma in heaven, although you cannot see her; your mamma is not gone for ever."

"I *have* a mamma, then," said Clara, "although I cannot see her? I will think of that, and I will not cry so much, nor feel so sorry when I think of other children having a mamma, for I have one too. I felt as if she were gone for ever."

But I wish God had left her for a while, for I would have loved her so very much, and done everything she told me."

"Dear Clara," said Mrs Melville, tenderly, "your mamma loved you very much—her last words were of you, her last prayers were for you—but there is One who loves you much more. You say that you would have loved your mamma very much, and done everything she told you. Why will you not love this best and kindest Friend? He gave His own life for you, and it was in love to you that He took away your mamma, that you might learn to love Him best.

"Besides," added Mrs Melville, solemnly, "unless you seek Him, and make Him your friend, you will never again be with your mamma. None but God's children are permitted to enter heaven."

"Tell me what to do, dear Mrs Melville," said Clara.

"You must ask God to give you a new heart, to teach you to love Him, and to make you sorry for your sins; for it is a sad thing that our hearts are so cold and

hard, that we never think of being sorry for sin or loving God until He himself teaches us. And, when you feel tempted to wish that you had a mother, dear Clara, remember that God knows best what is good for us. Do not murmur against Him, but go to Him, ask Him to make you His child. When you think of your mamma, do not wish to have her back; remember that she is happy with the Lord in heaven, and think how happy she would be to know that her child, the dear baby she left behind her in this world, was a child of God."

"I will do this," said Clara.

"Think also, my dear Clara, that while many children have lost both father and mother, you have a dear, kind papa, who loves you, and thinks of you, and does all he can to make you happy. He has no other child than you; will you not try to be a dutiful little daughter, and make him happy? You are very young now, and perhaps cannot do as much as a grown person, you may think; but remember that young children, by obedience and love,

may make their parents very happy ; and in the meantime you must prepare for much higher duties."

"How, dear Mrs Melville?"

"If you are industrious in all your studies, you will fit yourself not only to be really a companion to your papa, but will also be likely to have much more influence over your fellow-creatures than you would otherwise have. Now also is the time to cultivate gentle, amiable, and unselfish dispositions. When these are neglected in youth, we either grow up to be useless and hurtful characters, or have a fearful struggle to acquire them afterwards. Do not imagine, from what I am saying, that we are expected to do these things ourselves. We cannot do them. Our hearts must be changed before we can even wish to have them changed. But remember that the gracious Father who took away your mamma, and who is willing to be your Father, will give you everything necessary, if you only ask Him in the name of His Son. And when you think of your mamma, and think how pleasant it would

be to lay your head on her lap, and tell her all your griefs, think also, dear child, of Him who is so gentle and kind, that, when on earth, He took children in His arms and blessed them. Do not be afraid to go to Him. He once sent a gracious message to the Israelites when they were in distress, and it was this: 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' He will comfort you if you only go to Him. Will you promise me to ask the Lord Jesus to be your friend?"

"I will," said Clara, earnestly.

"And another thing, my dear—will you remember that we all love you here? Do not think that because we have not known you long we cannot love you. I loved you before I ever saw your dear little face, because you were the child of my friend and sister, and now I love you more than before. Papa thinks of you as of a little daughter, and you are quite a little sister to the children."

Clara smiled brightly, and said, "I wish I might call you something; Mrs Melville is so long that I do not like to say it, and

it sounds as if I did not know you very well. I should not like to call you mamma, for I have my own dear mamma in heaven; but may I call you aunt?—you said mamma was like a sister to you. May I call you aunt, and then Elizabeth and Mary will be my cousins? I have no cousins.”

“Well, this is rather a novel arrangement,” said Mrs Melville; “but I daresay it is a good one, and I am very glad to have you for a little niece. However,” continued she, smiling, “if I am to allow you to call me aunt, I must expect you to be very dutiful.”

“And I will be so,” said Clara. “I will do all you tell me, and try to be a comfort to papa when I grow up. Do you think I shall ever be a comfort to him?”

“I really think you will, my little niece, if you go on trying; but so many things go to make up a comfort, that you must watch over what you are pleased to term little things, such as neatness, punctuality, &c.”

“I will do so,” said Clara, smiling.

“And now, dear, I must go in-doors.

There is Mr Stewart passing out at the gate, so that the lessons must be over, and I daresay Mary and Elizabeth will join you presently. Will you come with me, or wait for them here?"

"I will wait here, if you please," said Clara.

She was left alone for a few minutes, and the feeling uppermost in her mind was one of satisfaction. She had some new relations. "Although Mrs Melville is not really my aunt," thought Clara, "she is just as good as if she were. Some people have aunts that are not half so kind and nice. Besides, mamma and she were like sisters," she said to herself; "and so it is just right I should call her aunt. But, oh! if I had a mamma like Mary and Elizabeth! I must not cry—I must not cry. God took her away, and she is very happy. I will ask God to make me His child."

Clara covered her face with her hands, and leaning over the table that stood in the middle of the arbour, she uttered an earnest and true, though very imperfect prayer. "God will hear me," she said; "Mrs Melville said He would hear me."

She had dried her eyes, and was looking quite comforted, when Kenneth ran into the harbour. "Ah! there you are," he said; "we have been looking for you ever so long. Mary and Elizabeth are coming down the middle walk."

"Dear Clara," said Mary, kissing her, "I hope your papa will leave you with us for a long time, for we all love you, and mamma and papa love you; and I am glad that you are mamma's niece now."

"And that we are all cousins," continued Elizabeth. "It is a beautiful arrangement; there could not be a better, unless you were to be our sister; but I suppose your papa would not allow that. Never mind, a cousin will do instead. And now listen. Mamma has just had a note from Mrs Williamson, who lives at that great white house, the 'Grove.' I do not know why it is called 'Grove,' for there is scarcely a tree near it."

"Never mind, Elizabeth; do go on," said Kenneth.

"This note contains an invitation," said Elizabeth, "for every one of us to go to

the Grove next Saturday to dine, spend the afternoon, and take tea. Will it not be delightful? Mamma is writing to say that we shall be happy to go; delighted, charmed, she should have said. How can you be so very grave and sober, Mary?"

"Because I never do get into such extacies as you do, Elizabeth. It is not my nature to do so, and I could not if I tried."

"Saturday is the day after to-morrow?" said James.

"Yes, my dear," said Elizabeth, "so be steady at your lessons to-day and to-morrow, and on Saturday, you know, we shall have very few."

"What sort of person is Mrs Williamson, and what sort of house is the Grove?" said Clara.

"The house is that great white house on the left hand of the road, about a mile below the inn where you left the coach the night that you came here with papa. It is not very long since it was built; and the trees have not had time to grow. There are quantities of them round the house,

little fir-trees about the height of James, and some of them not so tall. But there is a nice garden—loads of fruit ; although, I daresay, it is not ripe just now. And Mrs Williamson herself is a very nice person, very fond of children, and very kind. I daresay you will like her very much."

"How shall we get to the Grove on Saturday?" said Clara.

"In the dog-cart," said Mary. "Frank is to ride Donald, and George Fergusson is to drive us. If you like the front best, you can sit there, Clara, with James beside you, and Elizabeth, Kenneth, and I, will manage nicely behind. There is a nice leather apron to fasten us in."

"Look here, Bessie," exclaimed James, "here are some red currants—really red currants. I daresay some of the strawberries are ripe."

"I know there are some ripe," said Elizabeth ; "but do not touch any, for papa said that we were not to touch the strawberries until he gave us leave."

"Come back from the beds, James,"

said Mary; "it is much better not to go near them at all."

James returned to the harbour.

"Oh, there is Frank coming in by the gate," said Mary; "when he comes, we will speak of that plan that you and I, Elizabeth, were talking of."

"Well, ladies," said Frank, "what great debate keeps you this fine day in the harbour?"

"Nothing very particular," said Clara.

"Now that you have come," said Mary, "we wish to consult you about something."

"I feel very much flattered," said Frank.

"Do be quiet; you know we have not given mamma anything for a long time. Papa is going down by the coach to-morrow, and I think we might trust him to get something for us, because he always remembers any commissions we give him. I think we should give mamma some nice book."

"Not a book," said Frank; "she has plenty of books."

"But a new one," urged Mary; "I daresay papa can tell us the name of some

interesting book that mamma would like to have."

"Well, if I am to give my opinion," said Frank, "I should say that a new work-box would be a capital present for mamma. The one she has is old, and faded, and shabby. A handsome work-box, lined with crimson."

"Or blue?" suggested Elizabeth.

"Oh, blue if you like," said Frank; "what do you think, Clara?"

"Of the work-box or the colour?"

"Of both."

"I think a work-box, lined with crimson, would be an excellent present; much better than a book; for if Mrs Melville wishes to read, she has only to go to the study, and she can find loads of books, and work-boxes are not so common."

"Certainly not," said Elizabeth; "so I vote for the work-box also."

"And so do I," said Mary, "since mamma's work-box is very shabby; and we will give her a book some other time. What do you say, Kenneth and James?"

"We vote for the work-box," said the boys.

"It is well that you do," said Frank, "or you would make up a very disagreeable minority."

"What's a minority?" said James.

"Never mind just now, but ask mamma some time or other. Come and let us look for papa."

"He is in his study," said Mary; "but I daresay we may be allowed to disturb him now. He has been there for some time."

"If we go to his study by the proper entrance, mamma will both see and hear us," said Frank; "for there is such a troop of us. Let us go round by the shrubbery to the study window."

The study was on the ground-floor, and the window at no great distance from the ground. When the children reached it, Mary said in a whisper to Frank, "The window is open. I can see papa sitting reading. Shall we disturb him?"

"It won't disturb him to speak to him," said Frank; "I daresay he is just going to

give up reading. Papa," he continued, putting his head in at the open window, "have you time to attend to us? will you allow us to come into the study?"

"How many are there of you?" said Mr Melville, rising, and approaching the window.

"Just every one of us," said Elizabeth.

"You may come in," said Mr Melville, "and let me hear what you have to say."

"But, if you please, papa," said Mary, "you must let us go in by the window. We don't wish mamma to know that we are here."

"I don't quite like the idea of harbouring rebels in my study," said her papa.

"Not rebels, papa," said Mary, "loyal, dutiful subjects. We wish to give mamma a nice surprise."

"If that is the case," said Mr Melville, "you may come in, and I shall lay aside all my papers. I cannot leave my literary treasures at the mercy of such Huns."

Frank got in first, and, with a little assistance, all the others followed.

"We are just in time," said Clara; "I

saw Mrs Melville in the shrubbery walk, but I do not think she saw us."

"I daresay mamma wonders where we all are, and why everything is so quiet," said Kenneth.

"Now, children," said Mr Melville, sitting down, and looking at the group that stood beside the study table, "what have you to say to me? One at a time, remember."

"We wish you to buy something for us when you are in town to-morrow," said Mary.

"Do you think you could choose a nice work-box?" said Elizabeth.

"I daresay I could," said her papa; "but you must tell me all about it; what it is to be like; and for whom it is to be purchased."

"It is for mamma," said Frank; "we are going to join and give her a present; and as her work-box is very shabby, we think it will be best to give her a new one."

"How much money have you?" said Mr Melville.

"Eight shillings and sixpence," said Frank.

"I am afraid that will not buy a very handsome work-box," said his papa.

"Get as nice a one as you can, papa," said Mary; "we would have given you some more money, but the rest of our pocket-money must go for other things. You know what they are."

"I understand," said her papa. "Now, is this the only commission I have to execute for you?"

"Yes, thank you, papa," said Elizabeth. "You will not forget that the box is to be lined with crimson."

"I do not think that any of you mentioned that before," said Mr Melville.

"No, I think we forgot to tell you," said Mary.

"You will not say a word of this to mamma?" said Elizabeth.

"Not a syllable," said her papa. "Do you think you can trust me, Clara?" continued Mr Meville, turning to her.

"I think we can," said Clara, smiling.

"Papa, do you know that we are in-

vited to the Grove on Saturday," said James.

"Yes, my little boy."

"Don't you think that we shall be very happy?"

"I hope you may," said Mr Melville.

"I am sure we shall," said Elizabeth; "why do you only hope we may, dear papa?"

"Because it is impossible to know beforehand whether we shall be happy or not ourselves, much less to know with regard to others."

"But can you not tell or think that we shall be happy on Saturday, when Mrs Williamson is so kind, and when there are to be so many children at the Grove?"

"No, my dear, for happiness does not depend on outward things alone. They go to constitute a very small portion of happiness; and something in your own little heart may hinder you from being as happy as you anticipate. Do not set out on Saturday with too great anticipations of pleasure. Fear God, and set Him before you all the day long, and I have

no doubt you will be happy, for you will carry that within you that will keep you from many things that hinder and destroy happiness."

"Papa," said Mary, "you tell us sometimes not to think too much of anything beforehand."

"So I do, for we are apt in our own minds to exaggerate both pleasure and pain, anticipating more of each than really happens. It is better not to think much of anything beforehand. We often lose much present pleasure by allowing our minds to dwell on anticipated happiness or sorrow. The happiness, if it does come, proves to be much less than we have imagined; and very often the sorrow does not come at all, or it comes with so much of God's kindness along with it, that we feel ashamed of our sinful anticipations. God teaches us in the Bible the folly of anticipating either joy or sorrow. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon, speaking by the Holy Spirit, says: 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' And our Saviour says:

‘ Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ ”

“ It makes me feel a little sad to hear you say these things, papa,” said Elizabeth. “ Don’t you feel so, Clara ? ”

“ Yes, a little,” said Clara ; “ and yet I know I am often not so happy as I think some time before I shall be, and very often things turn out better than I thought. When papa told me that I was to pay a visit here, I thought I should be so miserable to leave him, and I was very sorry ; but now I am very happy.”

“ And so we shall always be, my dear little girl, if we love God, and seek to please Him. We can never be really unhappy if we have God for our friend, and many of the little passing events that would otherwise annoy us, have no power to harm us when we truly love God. You must not feel sad because I tell you not to think much of any coming pleasure. Even if I did not tell you this, you would soon find out of yourselves that happiness aris-

ing from earthly things is not nearly so great as young people imagine it must be. It is much better that you should be told this, and taught where to seek true happiness, than that you should be allowed to anticipate more from this world than it can ever give. With regard to the happiness that God has promised to those who love Him, you can never (if you are a child of God) think too much of it; for St Paul says, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' I cannot, however, expect you altogether to understand the folly of anticipating; for you are young, and much older people than you, whose expectations have been often disappointed, are still too prone to anticipate both pleasure and pain. You must, however, diligently make use of the present time, and then you will not be so much tempted to look forward to anything in this world. It is with the present alone we have to do. We can never undo the past; we dare not say what the future will bring; but if we earnestly

seek God in the present time, we know whose blood can wash out both past and present sin, and whose Holy Spirit can give strength both for present and future duty. So, my dear Elizabeth, if you truly seek to please God, I shall expect to hear on Saturday evening that you have been happy at Mrs Williamson's."

"Shall you come home to-morrow, papa?" said Kenneth.

"Yes," said his papa; "I hope to come home by the evening coach. I do not know of anything at present to prevent me."

"There is mamma looking for us," said James, who was standing at the window. "I heard her ask Jessie if she knew where we were."

"Run away, then," said Mr Melville, "every one of you, and don't keep your mother looking for you."

CHAPTER IX.

"DID papa set off very early this morning?" said Mary next day to her mother, when they met in the dining-room before breakfast.

"Not very early," said Mrs Melville.
"Did you not hear him leave the house?"

"No, mamma, Jessie did not awake us very early this morning; Elizabeth and Clara are not yet quite dressed."

"Then bring me the Bible, Mary, and go up-stairs, and desire the children, to make haste and come down to prayers."

In five minutes all the children appeared—Frank from his books, Kenneth and James from the garden, and Elizabeth and Clara from their somewhat late toilet. After the children had said good-morning,

and had quietly seated themselves, the servants came in, and Mrs Melville read prayers.

Breakfast was then brought, and as all the children had breakfast in general with their papa and mamma, two very nice little plates of porridge made their appearance, along with the toast, oat-cakes, and scones. Elizabeth, who had been promoted lately from porridge to bread and other articles at breakfast, generally received in a saucer a little of Kenneth's porridge, and he on his part was very willing to give it for a little bread. Not so James. His love for porridge was the occasion of many a jest among his brothers and sisters.

"How will you manage to get on without porridge, James," said Elizabeth, "when you go to college?"

"I shall not do without it," said James; "I shall buy some oatmeal. Don't people sell oatmeal in Edinburgh and Glasgow, mamma?"

"Oh yes," said his mamma.

"And even if they did not," continued

James, "I would get some at the mill here, and take it with me."

"Only fancy James taking a sack of oatmeal to Edinburgh," said Frank. "Do you think, mamma, he will grow more like other people when he is older?"

"I daresay this youthful liking for porridge will not always be in such vigour as it is at present," said Mrs Melville. "I suppose that is what you mean by becoming more like other people. But even if it should continue, it will be a very harmless peculiarity, and I had much rather see James care for such plain food, than see him or any of you care for dainties."

"Like Mr Herbert," said Clara. "Oh, Frank, if you had ever seen Mr Herbert; how he does eat! Such enormous breakfasts!—I never saw him at dinner."

"Could he eat all that is on the table here?" said Elizabeth.

"A great deal more," said Clara. "Not so much bread, I daresay, but more eggs, and that sort of thing. I wonder he does not make himself ill."

"But, my dear Clara," said Mrs Mel-

ville, "you must not judge rashly. You must not compare Mr Herbert with ladies and children. Perhaps he does not eat much more than many other gentlemen."

"A great deal more than papa or Mr Melville," said Clara. "You have no idea how much it is. I have often heard people talk of him. Nurse says, that when he was a little boy, he must have been allowed to eat just as he chose."

"I daresay nurse is right," said Mrs Melville. "You will often find that the bad habits of grown people arise from their not being trained and corrected when young. And instead of taking pleasure in talking of Mr Herbert, and laughing at him, try to remember only the lesson we ought to learn—that of self-denial in our meals."

"Would it not be a good plan, mamma," said Mary, "if our food were not quite so pleasant to the taste? we should not care so much for it."

"No, my dear," said her mother, "I do not think that would be a good plan, for God has done quite otherwise. He has done so much for the pleasure and happiness

of His creatures, that He has not only provided things necessary for them, but things that, although not necessary, are very pleasant. If we confined ourselves to necessary things in food, bread, water, and perhaps milk, would be quite sufficient; but what a variety of pleasant things the earth produces, besides the grain requisite for bread !”

“ Yes, mamma,” said Kenneth ; “ all the fruit which we have in the garden.”

“ And in many other gardens, and throughout the world,” said Mrs Melville. “ God provides these good things, that we may eat with thankfulness and moderation. True religion must be carried with us to table as well as everywhere else ; and when we sincerely ask God to bless our food, we shall surely endeavour not to offend Him by inordinate love for His gifts. Besides, your plan, Mary, of rendering food distasteful, could not insure true moderation. The heart might be longing after dainties, instead of being contented, in the midst of good things, to be temperate.”

“ Then it is not wrong to like fruit and

other good things, mamma?" said Kenneth.

"No, my dear boy, not wrong; but wrong to care for such things so as to transgress the rules of temperance. It is wrong to go on eating after we have had enough, simply because we like the food before us; and very wrong to indulge in luxuries, when many around us have not even bread."

"Mamma, I hope I shall not care about eating when I am a man," said Kenneth.

"I hope not, my darling; I hope none of my children will care for themselves, but that they may learn in all things to be self-denying. And this reminds me of one thing that I wish to mention to you. You know that there are a few strawberries ripe in one of the beds in the garden. Papa does not wish them to be touched at present. You will remember not to go near them?"

"Yes, mamma," said Mary. "I heard papa tell George Fergusson that we were not to go near the beds. I think he told George, because he gathered the first ripe currants last year, and gave them to us."

when you wished to have them for a poor sick woman."

"Very true," said her mamma; "but we must not talk any longer now, as we shall encroach upon lesson hours. Ring the bell, and let us have the breakfast things removed. When your morning lessons are finished, I wish you to go with me to the village. Elizabeth can take her little socks, and we shall call on Mrs M'Intosh."

"Thank you, mamma," said Elizabeth.

"May I buy some muslin and edging?" said Clara.

"For what purpose, my dear?" said Mrs Melville.

"To make a very nice cap for nurse. I can sew pretty well now, and I should like to let nurse see that I can make something."

"Very well, my dear Clara, you shall buy the muslin, and I will shape the cap for you."

"Thank you, dear Mrs Melville," said Clara, throwing her arms around her; "you are very kind; I love you very much."

"You don't call me aunt," said Mrs Melville, stooping down to kiss her, and smiling.

"No," said Clara, "I am afraid some people would not understand it, and would laugh at me. But it makes me happy to call you aunt in my own mind, and to think of you as my dear aunt."

"Perhaps that is the best plan, my little niece; but now away to lessons, and work hard. I think I see Mr Stewart coming."

With a happy face, Clara ran up-stairs for her lesson books, and in a minute or two joined the others, who were assembled with Mr Stewart in the dining-room.

Things went on much as usual in the school-room, except that Elizabeth did not pay so much attention to her lessons as she usually did. Visions of a small pair of socks, and the little feet for which they were intended, fluttered before her eyes, and she was absorbed in deep meditation with regard to the probability of their fitting, when Mr Stewart said, "Elizabeth, attend to your lessons."

This command aroused Elizabeth from

a pleasant meditation to what at the time she considered an unpleasant duty. She did it with no very good grace. In a few minutes she turned to Clara, who was sitting next her at the table, and began to whisper to her. Clara looked distressed, and would fain have turned away, but could not change her seat.

Mr Stewart called Elizabeth to him, and having desired Frank to look at a lesson for a minute or two, he spoke to the little girl.

"I am sorry," said Mr Stewart, "to see you look so idle, Elizabeth; and I am quite afraid that if you do not just now begin to try to do better, to-day will not be a happy day. You were thinking of something pleasant when I spoke to you, were you not?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth.

"And it was a little difficult to turn again to lessons? I quite understand all this; but remember it is necessary that while you are with me, you should pay attention to all that I give you to do. Will you put away all idle thoughts, and be attentive now?"

"I will," said Elizabeth, "and I will not talk to Clara again to-day. Would you like to know what I said to her? I asked her if she thought you had made the book I had in my hand." It was *Stewart's Geography*.

"That was rather a foolish question. Now, go and be busy."

Elizabeth went to her seat, and having profited by Mr Stewart's gentle reproof, did not again transgress during the forenoon. When the children left Mr Stewart, they ran up-stairs to get ready to accompany Mrs Melville to the village. Clara unlocked her desk, and took out the pretty little blue purse that contained her small amount of wealth.

"How much muslin shall I require to buy, Mary?" said Clara.

"Mamma will tell you," said Mary.

"May I help you to make the cap, Clara?"

"No, thank you," said Clara; "I think nurse would like better that I made it myself. You can't think how vexed she used to be about my sewing."

"I should think you felt quite as vexed?" said Elizabeth.

"I don't know," said Clara ; " but there is Kenneth telling us to make haste."

The three girls ran down-stairs, and found Mrs Melville in front of the house. They all set out together, except Frank, who remained at home to finish some of his lessons. They went, in the first place, to the village shop. There were two or three places throughout the village where things were sold, but this was the shop, and it was almost as comprehensive at Inverallan as an American store. Every description of material for clothing was there, from coarse blue cloth to gay-coloured muslins. Bonnets, gloves, ribbons, and the little et-ceteras of dress, were to be procured there, and found their way thence to remote glens and lonely hill-sides.

Nor was this all ; these articles formed but a small proportion of the contents of the shop at Inverallan.

James Walker, its owner, was a grocer and ironmonger, as well as a draper, and sold tea, sugar, almonds, and raisins, Keiller's mixtures, soap, nails, brooms, shovels, spades, &c.

After Mrs Melville had made her purchases, she turned to Clara, and asked her to come and look at some muslin. The muslin was very soon chosen. Some pretty edging was looked at, and approved of; and having paid for her purchases, Clara took her small parcel and followed Mrs Melville out of the shop.

"Should I not have bought some thread?" said Clara.

"You have some," said Mrs Melville; "the cotton with which you hemmed your pocket-handkerchiefs will do nicely for the cap."

Mrs Melville and the children walked towards the cottage of Lizzie M'Intosh, as she was generally called. She had been with Mrs Melville as a servant two years before her marriage, and was a great favourite with the children, who paid her frequent visits, and considered her thick oat-cakes to be decidedly superior to those made at the manse.

When Mrs Melville and the children entered her neat cottage, they found Lizzie engaged in washing, standing at the tub,

and using one foot to rock a cradle, in which lay a smiling infant of five or six months old. It was wide awake, and was cooing, apparently contented to remain in its cradle. Close to the fire stood a little girl of five or six years old, without frock or pinafore, the two garments having been hung to dry on the back of a chair close to the fire.

The little girl stood with red and purple arms, that seemed to have been long in cold water. She had her finger in her mouth, and her head down, when the visitors entered. Mrs Melville spoke to Lizzie for a few moments, while Clara, Elizabeth, and Mary, crowded round the cradle where the baby lay.

"May we take him out, Lizzie?" said Mary.

"Oh yes, Miss Mary," said Lizzie.

"Be careful, Mary," said Mrs Melville.

"Sit down, and take the baby on your lap; and take care that you do not let him fall."

"No fear," said Lizzie, who seemed to have few apprehensions with regard to her

little boy. "Miss Mary knows fine how to hold him. She'll not let him fall."

Mrs Melville turned round, and for the first time perceived Maggie, the little girl who stood sulking beside the fire, only glancing occasionally from under her fair hair at the visitors, whom she was generally the first to welcome.

"Why, Maggie," said Mrs Melville, "what is the matter? What have you been about to-day?"

"Maggie has been very bad, ma'am," said her mother; "she never minds a word that is said to her; she's never but down - at the burn, although I have told her over and over again that she's not to go there. I have no time, with all the washing and cleaning, to look after her, and what can I do but just tell her not to go down to the water?"

"But, Lizzie," said Mrs Melville, "you must not let your little girl disobey you; you must punish her when she does wrong."

"Well, ma'am," said Lizzie, "I do that. Many a whipping she gets, but I

don't think she cares for them. It's not an hour since I put a clean frock and pinafore on her, and sent her out to play; and, before I had done more than put the bairn to sleep in the cradle, she was up from the burn dripping like a water kelpie. I was so provoked at her, that I gave her a good shake, and then with her crying she woke the baby."

"Maggie," said Mrs Melville, "this is a sad account; come here, and speak to me. You should not go down to the burn when your mother tells you not."

"I'll no go again," said Maggie, firmly.

"What made you forget to-day, and how did you get so wet?"

"Johnnie Fraser asked me to come and see his little boat; and, just when I was standing looking, the big dog at the inn ran against me, and I tumbled in; but I wasn't drowned."

"So I see," said Mrs Melville, smiling. "But, Maggie," she continued, gravely, "you must try to remember what your mother tells you to do, and you must try to do it. God loves little children that

are obedient, and that try to please Him. When you go out to play, and leave your mother in the house, perhaps you think that she does not see you."

"She can't see me unless she comes to the door; and whiles, when I go up the burn, she does not see me at all."

"Very true," said Mrs Melville. "Your mother cannot always see you, but God sees you always, whether you go up or down the burn, it does not matter. He can see you wherever you go, and He always knows what you are doing. You must think of this, and try to do the things that will please God. I hope that next time I come here, I shall have a better account of you from your mother."

Mrs Melville then rose to leave the cottage, and Lizzie, laying her baby in the cradle, and desiring Maggie to look at him, ran to open the gate.

Mrs Melville stayed behind the children to gather a little honeysuckle from the paling in front of the cottage, and in so doing, she said, "I wish, Lizzie, that you would not whip Maggie quite so much."

"What am I to do with her, then, ma'am?" said Lizzie. "I'll no be fit to manage her if I don't whip her—she's an awfu' wild bairn."

"I don't think that a great deal of whipping does much good, Lizzie. I would advise you to try some other plan."

"Tell me what to do, ma'am, and I'll do it."

"In the first place, don't say too much to her about any little accident, when she has not intended to do wrong. You should always punish her for wilful disobedience, but if you punish her for everything alike, she will soon learn not to care for punishment."

"'Deed that's true, ma'am, for she does not care much already."

"Another thing is, that you must always keep your word with her. If you promise to punish her at any time, and don't do it, you do her a great deal of harm. Next time that she is tempted to disobey you, she thinks, naturally enough, that perhaps you may also forget to punish her. It does children a great

deal of harm to threaten without fulfilling."

"I'll try to mind all you have said, ma'am," said Lizzie.

"You must remember that God intrusted you with precious treasures, when He sent you these children. He says to every one who has the care of children, 'Take these children, and nurse them for me.' Unless you train these little ones for God, it would have been better for you that you never had had them. It is not enough that you think of your children's health and outward welfare (I know you do that most anxiously, Lizzie); you must think of their immortal souls; you must train them to fear God, to love the Saviour; and see what encouragement God gives in the Bible to those who do this. He says: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' This is great encouragement for us to train children rightly."

"I have not much learning, ma'am," said Lizzie, "but I'll do my best."

"Much learning is not needed, Lizzie.

If you love God yourself, you will pray for your little ones, and ask the aid of the Holy Spirit, that you may guide them aright. Maggie is a high-spirited child, and you must be firm with her; but I think she seems kind-hearted, and would do a great deal for gentle speaking."

"I'm frightened she gets the upper hand if I don't speak sharply," said Lizzie.

"Don't be afraid of that," said Mrs Melville; "you may speak as gently as you like to a child, if only you are firm, and never pass over anything in which there is sin."

"Well, ma'am," said Lizzie, "I am much obliged to you, and I'll mind what you've said, and see if Maggie will do better."

Mrs Melville then said "good-bye," and turned to go away, when Elizabeth came back with the socks in her hand. She gave them to Lizzie, who received them with many thanks. Mrs Melville and Elizabeth then joined the others, who were looking at a distressed hen that stood, with head stretched out and wings half-raised,

watching a brood of little yellow ducklings swimming in the burn.

"Mother, how sorry this hen is!" said Kenneth; "why does she not wade into the burn; it is quite shallow here?"

"Hens are not fond of getting wet, Kenneth," said his mother. "God made them to live on dry land alone, and when they do get wet, they have a most untidy, uncomfortable appearance."

"I saw some of the fowls that were caught in a shower one day," said James, "and their feathers were all rumpled, and they looked so thin. Ducks never look so."

"Because all the water-birds are provided with a sort of oil, with which they dress their feathers, and that keeps them from being wet; the water only glances on them, and does not go through. Hens have very little of this oil, and when wet, they have a very miserable appearance, as their feathers get completely soaked."

"The ducks do not seem to mind that old hen's distress," said Kenneth; "they are sailing about quite happily."

"They are complete little Maggie M'Intoshes," said Elizabeth.

"I am afraid you do injustice to the poor little ducklings," said her mother. "I do not think that they understand anything about the hen's distress, and are amusing themselves in very happy unconsciousness. But we must not stand here; it is time to turn homewards, for it is getting late."

The party then returned home; and, after dinner, the children went as usual to their mamma, who gave them their French lessons, and attended to their work. About half-an-hour before they left off working, Mrs Melville sent James to ask George Fergusson to come to her. James set off directly, and went to the garden. He stood at the top of the middle walk, and looked down the garden, and thought he saw George at the other end of the walk, among the raspberry bushes. He walked along, but did not see him, and in returning by the middle walk, he passed the strawberry beds, and happening to look down, his eye was caught by

a beautiful large scarlet strawberry peeping out from among the green leaves. He stopped to admire it. "I wonder if it is very ripe," he thought to himself, approaching the strawberry bed.

"Don't go near the strawberries," whispered conscience. "I am not going to touch them," said James to himself; "I am only going to look"——

"Don't go, don't go," urged conscience.

James made another step, and, stooping down, touched the strawberry. It was very ripe. "It must be very good," said James; "it is only one strawberry; I may take just one;" so he plucked the strawberry, and put it into his mouth. He had no sooner eaten it, than he heard Kenneth's voice at the garden-gate, telling him that George was not in the garden. He ran to his brother. "Have you been running fast, James?" said Kenneth; "your face is very red."

"No, Kenneth," said James, reddening still more. "Where is mamma?"

"She is telling George that he is to meet papa to-night. Are you not glad

about the work-box, James? Mamma does not know anything about it."

The two boys played for some time in front of the house, until they were joined by the girls and Frank, when they all set off to the burn to repair their bridge, and help Frank to sail a newly-rigged cutter.

It was a beautiful afternoon. The sky was blue, and had that very lofty appearance that betokens fine weather. It was not cloudless; on the contrary, it was almost covered with those small round white clouds—flocks of sheep, as they are sometimes called. The sunlight, therefore, was not so bright as usual, but came with a soft light, that allowed the children to play without seeking the shade of their favourite hazel-trees. After reconstructing the bridge, and making it quite safe as a means of crossing the burn, the girls assisted Frank to make his cutter ascend what they termed the "Cataracts of the Nile," a series of small rapids. This voyage was performed with the loss of one sailor and two passengers, who were washed off the deck of the vessel. As

Frank was about to go further up the burn, to a small pool which had been named "Loch Lomond," the girls sat down to await his return. Kenneth went with him; but James said he would rather not go, so he sat down, at some distance from the girls, on a large stone, and amused himself by throwing wild flowers into the water. .

"I feel very happy to-day," said Clara; "I think it is because of the nice surprise that your mamma will have this evening. I wonder what size of box it will be?"

"Not very large, I am afraid," said Mary, "for papa did not seem to think that eight shillings and sixpence was very much."

"Never mind," said Elizabeth; "I dare say it will be a very nice box. Have you a work-box, Clara?"

"No," said Clara; "I have only a work-basket. Papa gave me a desk the night before I left home—the little desk I have here."

"How nice it must be to have a desk!" said Elizabeth; "don't you feel happy

when you unlock yours, Clara, and take out some paper?"

"I did at first, very happy; but now I do not much care."

"Don't you think Lizzie M'Intosh has a very funny way of behaving to her little Maggie?" said Elizabeth.

"Very odd indeed," said Mary; "only imagine mamma shaking and whipping Kenneth and James in that way."

"She must be a cruel woman," said Clara.

"I do not think she is," said Mary; "she is very fond of Maggie, and is very kind to her. I once said to mamma that I thought Lizzie M'Intosh was not kind; but mamma said she meant to be kind to Maggie, but did not understand how to correct her without whipping her."

"I am very glad," said Elizabeth, "that mamma understands that subject; I should not fancy being whipped for nothing, or next to nothing, as Maggie is. But now that I think of it, what makes James sit there instead of playing with Frank and Kenneth?"

"Ask him?" said Mary.

Elizabeth rose and went over to James, and asked him why he chose to sit alone?

"If you don't wish to play with Frank and Kenneth, come with us," she said.

"No, thank you," said James.

"Have you quarrelled with Kenneth?"

"No, Kenneth and I never quarrel."

"Then what can be the matter with you; you must be ill, if you are not cross?"

"I am not ill, Bessie, and I am not cross, but I like to sit here;" and James looked down, and again began to throw flowers on the water.

Elizabeth turned away, and told Mary and Clara that she could make nothing of him.

In the meantime, James sat with a very sorrowful heart. He knew well that he had done wrong. It was of no use to say to himself that he had only taken one strawberry; it was the same sin, he knew, to take one as to take a great many. Neither did he attempt to console himself by thinking that as no one had seen him, his papa could never know; for James knew that

his heavenly Father had seen him. So he sat alone, unhappy and miserable, wishing that he had never touched the strawberry; that he had never gone into the garden; and yet not able to resolve to do what he knew he ought to do—to confess all to his papa and mamma.

At tea, his mamma noticed his pale cheeks and dejected manner; but, without saying anything to him, she attributed them to some slight indisposition, and inwardly resolved that, unless he looked a great deal better next day, he should not go to the Grove.

Shortly before the younger boys went to bed, Mr Melville returned. George had gone to meet him with the dog-cart, which came back loaded with parcels of various kinds. A brown paper parcel was removed by Mr Melville himself, and carried carefully into the house.

Mr Melville said, that before he had any tea, he should look at some of his parcels. They had all been brought into the dining-room by the attendants, who hovered round him in every direction; and from among

them he selected the parcel he had himself taken out of the dog-cart. Mr Melville sat down, and began to untie the string which fastened it.

"Here is a knife, papa," cried Elizabeth, snatching one from the table.

"Have a little patience," said her father; "this piece of string may yet be useful."

"It will do nicely for reins for horses, papa," said Kenneth.

The string was untied at last, and the brown paper taken off. Then appeared some paper of a softer kind, which, being merely folded round the article that it contained, was easily removed. A sheet of silver paper was then taken off, and Mr Melville placed upon the table a beautiful rosewood work-box. He took a small key out of his pocket, and opening the box, displayed to the admiring eyes of the children the crimson lining, the pretty pair of scissors, the tape needle, reels of cotton, &c.

"What a lovely work-box!" exclaimed the children.

"I am glad you are pleased with it,"

said Mr Melville ; " I had much difficulty in procuring it. Almost all those which I saw of the proper size had blue or green linings."

" How shall we all present it to mamma when she returns to the room?" said Mary.

" Could we not take off the cups from the tea-tray, and put the work-box on it, and then we could all take hold at some corner or another?" said Frank.

" To be sure we can," said Elizabeth. " Hold the box, Clara, and Mary and I will take away the cups. Don't touch anything, boys; you will spill the cream or sugar, or do some mischief."

By the time Mrs Melville re-entered the room, the work-box was placed in the middle of the tea-tray, which was held at the four corners by Frank, Mary, Clara, and Elizabeth, and supported elsewhere by Kenneth and James.

" Mamma," said Frank, " we hope you will accept this work-box from us?"

" It is quite new," said Elizabeth, " and it was bought for you."

"We all helped to buy it," said Kenneth.

"My dear children," said Mrs Melville, "I am indeed obliged to you; it is a beautiful gift; but I am afraid you have deprived yourselves of all your pocket-money?"

"Not deprived, mamma," said Mary; "we were all so happy to join and get this box for you, and we have some money still."

"Then you must be richer than I thought you were, for this is a handsome box."

"We gave papa eight shillings and sixpence; perhaps he has added a little—have you, papa?"

"A little," said Mr Melville.

"I must take great care of this pretty box," said Mrs Melville, putting it on a side table.

"Don't be the least careful of it," said Elizabeth; "use it every day if you please, mamma, and when it is old, we will give you another—shall we not, Clara?"

"Yes," said Clara, "and a larger and handsomer one."

"Now, little boys," said Mrs Melville, "you must go to bed. Come to my room, and we shall read a few verses together; but say good-night first to papa and brothers and sisters."

CHAPTER X.

AFTER Mrs Melville had left her little boys, and had gone down-stairs, Jessie came and put them to bed. They were both very tired, and Kenneth fell asleep almost immediately after he lay down in his little crib; but although James shut his eyes, he could not sleep. He heard his sisters and Clara go to their own rooms; then Frank came up-stairs; but still James could not sleep. He began to think of one of the verses which his mamma had read to Kenneth and him that evening—"I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." He remembered the verse particularly well, because he had learned the same verse only a few days

before; and now it passed through his mind, and he repeated over and over again, "I will arise, and go to my father." He began to weep, and at last he said to himself, "I WILL go down-stairs and tell papa and mamma. I think I would feel better if I told them, and asked them to forgive me."

But again he thought, "Perhaps papa will be very angry with me for disobeying; and, oh! what shall I say? It will be better, though," he continued, "to go at once, for I am very unhappy."

The little boy then got up. Although it was past ten o'clock, there was quite enough of light to enable him to see every object distinctly; for in a clear night in June, in the north of Scotland, the twilight almost meets the dawn; there is very little real night. He looked about for something to put around him, but could see nothing, so he took the blanket from his little crib, and wrapping himself in it, proceeded to go down-stairs.

The little bare feet made no noise on the carpeted stairs, and he arrived without

encountering any one at the dining-room door. He laid his hand irresolutely on the handle, and then drew back. Mr Melville heard the handle move, and opening the door, he looked out, and said, "Who is there?"

"It's me, papa," said a trembling voice from the foot of the stairs.

"Why, James, my boy, what has brought you here? have you been walking in your sleep?"

"No, papa," said James, sobbing violently.

Mr Melville lifted the child in his arms, carried him into the dining-room, and sat down with him on his knee.

"What is the matter, dear?" said his mother, kneeling beside him, and taking one of the feverish little hands in hers.

"Mamma, I have been a very naughty boy. I took a strawberry to-day when I was in the garden. I am very sorry, mamma—will you and papa forgive me? will God forgive me, mamma?"

"Yes, darling, God will forgive you for Jesus' sake, if you are sorry for having

grieved and offended Him, and papa and I will forgive you too ; but how happened it that you took the strawberry?—did you forget what papa said ?”

“ No, mamma ; I remembered quite well. You know you sent me to look for George Fergusson, and I went to the garden, for I thought he was there ; but he wasn't ; and when I was coming back, I saw the strawberry, and it looked so nice, that I went nearer, and touched it, and then, mamma, I gathered it.”

“ I am very sorry, James, that you did so,” said his papa, “ for I thought I could have trusted you.”

“ And you will be able to trust me, papa ; I will never, never do it again.”

“ I hope the sorrow you have felt to-night may be a lesson to you, my dear child. It was but a strawberry you took, but it was the same as if it had been a much greater thing. The only proof that I asked of your obedience to me was, that you should not touch these strawberries ; you know that in good time you would have been permitted to gather them.”

"Yes, papa."

"Now, when you found yourself obliged to go to the garden, what should you have done?"

"I should have run past the strawberry beds."

"Yes, and kept your eyes from them. You know that part of the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation'? When we say that prayer to God, if we say it with all our heart, we pray that God would keep us from all the places and things that would lead us to sin. Now, we must not only ask God to keep us from them, but we must keep away from them ourselves. Try to think of the meaning of what you say to God, and when you say, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,' try also to keep away from what is sinful."

"And will you forgive me for being disobedient to you, papa?"

"I will, James."

"And will you too, mamma?" said the little boy, putting his arms round her neck.

"Yes, dear," said his mother.

"May I ask God to forgive me now,

mamma? and will you tell me what to say?"

James knelt at his mother's lap, and clasping his hands reverently, he bent his head, and repeated after his mother a short simple prayer for forgiveness. When he rose from his knees, the sobbing had ceased, and he stood grave and quiet before his mother.

"Now, James," said his papa, "you must go to bed. You will sleep now that you have asked God to forgive you. Is not God kind to hear the prayers of a little boy like you?"

"Yes, papa; but I wish to ask one thing. Are you going to punish me?"

"No, James; you seem truly sorry for your fault, and I hope that such a thing will never occur again."

"I wish you would punish me, papa; it would make me remember another time. I will stay at home to-morrow if you like."

"No, James," said his mamma, "we have no wish that your fault should be made public in that way. If you had done it before your brothers and sisters, it

might have been necessary to have given you some punishment publicly for their sakes as well as your own ; but now that you have confessed your fault to us alone, it is quite different."

"Mamma, I will not take any strawberries for a week."

"I hope you don't think of trying to make up for your sin in that way, James?"

"No, no, mamma, but I think I ought to be punished ; it will make me think every day about it ; and I will ask God to keep me from forgetting."

"Very well, James ; but if you choose that punishment, you must for a week strictly keep to it."

"I will, papa."

"Now, come to bed," said Mr Melville, again wrapping the little boy in his blanket, and preparing to carry him up-stairs.

James was carried up-stairs with a much lighter heart than he had when he walked down. He was sorry for his sin ; he had confessed it to his Heavenly Father and his earthly parents, and had received forgiveness. His father laid him down in the

nursery, and left him to his mother, who made the crib comfortable, put her little boy in it, covered him, and then sat by his bed-side until he fell asleep, with a little hand clasped in hers.

The morning rose as beautiful as the children could wish, and early in the forenoon, the dog-cart, driven by George, conveyed them to the Grove. They returned early in the evening—as early as seven o'clock—and after putting away their ordinary books, and making their arrangements for Sunday, the girls had time for a quiet walk in the garden. They found Mr Melville there, with a book in his hand. He shut it when they came close to him, and inquired how they had enjoyed themselves.

“Not very much,” said Mary; “and I don’t think that Clara and Elizabeth enjoyed themselves at all!”

“How was that?” said Mr Melville.

“There were some very disagreeable children there,” said Clara; “they would do nothing, and they spoiled every game.”

“And said very rude things!” added

Elizabeth. "Mary did not hear them, for she was walking with some older girls that were there."

"Are you quite sure that you were very agreeable yourself, Elizabeth?" said her papa. "Do you not imagine that some one may be saying something of you just now which you would not like to hear?"

"Very likely, papa," said Elizabeth; "for both Clara and I felt very angry at some of the rude things."

"Did you make matters any better by being angry?" said Mr Melville.

"No, papa; they became rather worse."

"There was quite a quarrel, and very nearly a fight," said Frank, who now joined them.

"Not, I hope, between ladies?"

"Some of the boys were teasing Kenneth, papa," said Elizabeth, "and when he answered them, and quite properly, an older boy struck him, and"—

"And what?"

"I held back his arm with all my strength, and just then the footman came to tell us that dinner was ready, and he

held the boy fast, till we all got into the house."

"It is impossible for me altogether to decide upon the merits of this case," said Mr Melville; "but I hope Kenneth did not say anything rude?"

"Oh no!" said Clara; "he would not do something or another that he was asked to do, and then the rude boy said to him that he was a coward, and that he was tied to his mother's apron-strings. Then Kenneth said something that made us all laugh, and it was because we laughed that the rude boy struck Kenneth."

"Well, I am glad there was nothing worse," said Mr Melville. "The only thing of which you must be careful now is, that you do not cherish feelings of unkindness and dislike towards the young people you met to-day. Do not let to-day's quarrel make you judge them harshly; *you* would not like to be judged entirely even from what was seen of you to-day, and it is unfair to judge others from single actions."

"But you would not have us like all

the disagreeable people in the world, papa?" said Frank.

"No; I do not think that it is actually necessary to like disagreeable people in the same way as we do our friends and relations; but you know, Frank, that we are commanded in God's Word to love our enemies, and you will not go so far as to term those you call disagreeable people your enemies?"

"No, certainly not, papa."

"If we would fulfil God's command, we must not only have hearts entirely free from all dislike to our fellow-creatures, but we must feel kindly-disposed towards them, and be ready to render them any office of kindness. I do not mean to say that it is easy to do this. Our own hearts must convince us that a command so contrary to the natural inclinations of the human heart cannot be easily fulfilled. But we know that the Holy Spirit can give grace to fulfil this command, as well as to fulfil any other command which He has given us. How beautiful are our Saviour's words: 'Love your enemies;

bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' If He bids us do this to our enemies, to those who have wilfully sought to injure us, how much more should we seek to do good to those persons with whom we are brought into contact in ordinary life, even although we may not think them altogether agreeable? I am persuaded that, in judging kindly the actions of others, we commit fewer errors than when we judge harshly. And even when we have really received some ill-treatment, we do not know how sincerely the person may have repented of it, and how earnestly he may have asked forgiveness of God. Besides, there comes the evening and morning prayer, and how can we say, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' if we have any unkind thoughts?"

"Ah, papa, I never think of all these things, when I say that I dislike anybody," said Elizabeth.

"I daresay not," said her papa; "but you must try to think of them. I hope you have learned two lessons to-day?"

"Which two, papa?"

"I hope you have learned, from experience, not to be too sure of happiness beforehand; and the other—but I am not sure that it is learned yet."

"What is it, papa?"

"That we must not let the unkindness of others dwell on our minds, but endeavour to be gentle and forgiving."

"How I like the evenings in June, papa!" said Mary; "they are so bright and beautiful; and even the hills have a shade of green just now."

"So they have," said her papa; "everything looks cool and fresh. The trees are all in leaf, and have still the fresh green of their early foliage. In a few weeks, some of them will begin to assume a brownish tinge."

"I am always so sorry when I see any yellow leaves on the birch-trees," said Mary, "for I begin to think of winter."

"Do the birch-trees soon begin to have yellow leaves?" said Clara.

"Very early in autumn, sometimes," said Mary.

"The first night of severe frost in autumn generally changes the colour of the birch-trees," said Mr Melville; "not entirely, however, for I have often seen a tree almost entirely green, with a few yellow leaves here and there."

"I shall be so sorry to see them," said Clara.

"I am always very sorry at first," said Elizabeth; "but I don't mind it afterwards; and I believe Mary thinks just the same. But it is not the birch-leaves that tell me that autumn is coming."

"What is it?" said Clara.

"The gooseberries begin to grow scarce. First of all; you begin to think that there are not quite so many; then in a day or two you must search for them; and sometimes I have gone through the whole garden for a dozen gooseberries. It is quite a prize when you come to a branch with two or three on it."

"Then I suppose you abandon the garden altogether?" said her papa.

"No, for there are some raspberries and red currants; but the red currants are terribly sour, and the raspberries have little worms in them."

"I must say, Elizabeth," said her papa, "that your description of the coming of autumn is not very poetical. Do you not observe that the trees begin to change their hues, the corn grows full and heavy, the birds are very silent, and thick dews fall at night?"

"I have noticed some of these, papa, and I will look at them this year."

"There is no season of the year in which we should feel more grateful to God than in autumn. When we look at the fields waving with yellow corn, or see the reapers engaged in the fields, we should think of that promise made to Noah so many thousand years ago, that, while the earth remained, seed-time and harvest should not cease. The return of night and morning, of summer and winter, of cold and heat, have all been promised to

us ; yet we receive them all without thinking of the goodness of God in giving them, and without thinking of their own great benefit to us."

"Could we not do without some of them—night, perhaps?" said Clara.

"Not well, my dear. When we are tired and worn out with the day's labour, how refreshing are the cool dark hours of night! The wearied eyelids are not then fatigued with a glare of light; besides, the return of night compels us, as it were, to lay aside our employments for a few hours, and take that rest without which we would soon die. The whole earth rests also. Darkness obliges men to leave the fields; and the soft dew falls, which refreshes the fields and the gardens; for you know that dew cannot fall by day. Indeed I cannot tell you all the benefits that night brings."

"I did not think of any of these," said Clara.

"You will find, Clara, when you begin to examine His works, that God is indeed wise in counsel; nothing that He

has made is unnecessary, but is made for wise and good purposes. The very return of night, with the entire stop it puts to our worldly employments, should make us think of that night of death when no man can work ; and make us now, in the day of life, seek the Lord Jesus Christ, and secure the salvation of our souls, for that can only be done in this life."

"Papa," said Mary, "are you going to preach in the glen to-morrow evening?"

"I hope so."

"May some of us go with you?"

"You can ask your mamma, and see what she says ; you know that Frank is going with me."

"I hope mamma will let you go, Clara," said Mary, as they returned to the house.

"Won't your mamma go herself?"

"No," said Mary ; "mamma has got a class of girls on Sunday evening—grown-up girls, that have left the Sabbath-school. There are eight or nine, who come for an hour every Sunday evening to read with mamma, so that she cannot go with papa when he is going to preach at any distance

from home ; and Glen Darroch is such a beautiful place, that I wish you to see it."

"Is there a church?" said Clara, as they entered their rooms.

"No," said Mary ; "in the summer papa preaches in the open air, and I dare say he will do so to-morrow evening ; but in winter he preaches in a barn, and sometimes in the kitchen of the farm-house in the glen, if the weather is stormy, and there are not many people. Papa always has a cup of tea after he has done preaching. Mrs Forbes will not let him away without."

Much to Clara's delight, she received permission to accompany Mr Melville. Elizabeth was also to go, as Mary had gone the previous time ; and part of the time before retiring to rest was taken up with describing the beauties of Glen Darroch, and the hospitality of kind Mrs Forbes. .

The forenoon service at Inverallan began at twelve o'clock. Long before that time, groups of people might be seen slowly moving along the roads that led from

their mountain homes, while carts conveyed the inhabitants of some distant glen to church. Occasionally a single horseman or horsewoman might be seen—the quiet plough and cart-horse being transformed into a riding-steed for the occasion, and walking along with a grave, measured step. Very few of the old women wore bonnets. They were common enough among the young women and girls; but many of the old women still retained the scarlet cloak, or rather scarf; for it was a broad scarf of scarlet, that covered the head and shoulders, descending below the waist behind, covering the chest, but leaving the face exposed. Others wore caps, without the covering of the scarlet scarf. Many of the people from distant places reached the church long before twelve o'clock, and they gathered themselves together in groups in the churchyard—some of them sitting on grave-stones, others standing talking together, until the bell should summon them to the house of God.

The bell rung for five minutes, during which time the groups assembled in the

churchyard, and the villagers who had not before left their homes walked slowly and reverently to church.

Mr Melville preached to the people in English in the forenoon ; but, as almost all the people understood Gaelic, and many of them were much better acquainted with it than with English, the afternoon service was always in Gaelic. There was no interval. The English hearers left the church when Mr Melville pronounced the blessing, which concluded the English service ; while those who understood Gaelic remained, and were joined by others who attended only the service in Gaelic.

Mrs Melville, who did not understand much Gaelic, always returned home with the children, permitting those of her servants who knew both languages to remain at church. The afternoon, within doors in winter, and in the garden in summer, was spent in reading the Word of God, and good books with the children ; in hearing them repeat their hymns, portions of Scripture, and Catechism. In the evening, after tea, Mr Melville generally examined both

the children and servants on a chapter of the Bible, and some questions of the Shorter Catechism.

The children were always expected to give some account of the sermon to Mrs Melville in the afternoon. She used to talk of it with them, explain what they did not understand, and hear them repeat the text. Both Frank and Mary had begun to write for Mr Stewart what they recollected of their papa's sermon, for they were never allowed to take notes in church.

The afternoon soon passed in these employments, and when Mr Melville returned from church they all dined. On this afternoon, no long interval elapsed after dinner before the dog-cart and quiet horse were brought to the door. Clara was seated beside Mr Melville, Frank and Elizabeth behind, and they set off to Glen Darroch.

They drove slowly along, on a road that lay below the slope of some hills. Birch-trees and alders fringed the sides of the road. The hills rose, green in their first slope, the mossy grass being succeeded farther up by rocks and heather. Here and

there a single birch-tree waved on the hill, bending over some mountain stream, with its branches moving to and fro with every breath of wind. The shrill cry of the hawk was heard, as it wheeled in circles round the brow of a hill, the only sound that broke the stillness of everything except the continual ripple and gurgling of the little streams that, coming from the hills, and fed by the mists and rains of their summits, crossed the road at intervals to join the larger stream that flowed at some distance below.

When they entered the glen, Clara looked with wonder on the hills that enclosed it on both sides. There, too, the same stillness reigned, and Clara wondered if it were always so quiet.

When they reached Mrs Forbes's, Mr Melville's horse was taken to the stable; and as most of the people were already assembled, and it was the hour appointed for their meeting together, Mr Melville went to a hill pasture near the house, where a table with a large Bible and Psalm-book were also conveyed. The

people sat down on the short close grass. Elizabeth and Clara were provided with chairs, as Mrs Forbes would on no account allow them to sit on the grass. The sun was shining brightly, but the people sat in comfort, for the shadow of the hill was upon them.

The 121st Psalm, her papa's favourite, the one they had so often read together, had never before appeared so beautiful to Clara as it did when sung that evening by the people worshipping in the glen. While they were singing to the beautiful tune of "French"—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid;
My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heaven and earth hath made,"

Clara remembered what her papa had said one evening, that it was not from anything on earth that the Psalmist looked for help and safety, but only from the Lord. She remembered, too, that he had told her that the hills were emblems of God's almighty power and strength; and she thought of the verse that her papa had

taught her at the same time, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, from henceforth, even for ever."

When Mr Melville prayed, Clara thought that she had never understood his prayers so well before; but that was owing to her listening now without the wandering thoughts in which she had too often indulged during the prayers at church. Mr Melville preached from the 23d Psalm, and spoke in language which all could understand of Christ as the Almighty Shepherd of His people. He told them what claims He had on their love and gratitude, for He laid down His life for them. He spoke to them of Christ's willingness to save all who came to Him, and told them that if they were lost, it would be their own fault. Then he spoke of the particular and tender love Christ has for His lambs, and urged all the children who were present to seek the Lord Jesus without delay. He reminded them of the time when He took children in His arms and blessed them, and he told them

that Jesus loved children as much now as He then did.

After the service was concluded, Mr Melville talked for a little with one or two old men, and then turning to the children, he told them to go into Mrs Forbes's house, and wait until he returned.

Although it was an evening in June, they found a large fire in Mrs Forbes's kitchen. They were not, however, allowed to remain there, but were ushered into the room, where a table already shewed preparation for tea. There was a small loaf of wheat bread, rather ancient in its appearance, for it had been bought at Inverallan a week before. To make up for any deficiency in wheaten bread, there were plenty of oat-cakes, barley-scones, &c. The butter was delicately fresh; the honey, genuine heather honey, and the richest of cream stood ready to be poured into the tea.

Mrs Forbes insisted that the children should begin and eat something before Mr Melville returned.

"I can never get your papa to eat anything but a bit of bread that would not cover the top of a tea-cup," said Mrs Forbes; "but you'll eat, my bonnie bairns. It's a hungry thing to drive up from Inverallan to this glen, and then sit for an hour and a half on the hill-side. No but I could have sat longer to hear the minister speaking as he did. You're weel off, if you kent it only, living, as I may say, next door to the kirk. Sometimes here it will be three weeks, and I'll never hear a sermon."

"You come to Inverallan sometimes, Mrs Forbes?" said Frank.

"Oh yes, when I can get away, but that's not every Sabbath-day; so that I am glad when your papa comes up here. I daresay he is away up the glen to see the shepherd, that lives about a mile from this. You wouldn't hear what happened to him, Mr Frank?"

"No, what was it, Mrs Forbes?"

"He was out on the hill the other night, when we had rain. After the heavy rain cleared away, a thick mist came down on

the hill, and Donald lost his way, and fell over a rock, and broke his leg."

"And is he getting better?" said Elizabeth.

"He's no much better yet, but the doctor thinks he'll get well again. However, I'm thinking that it will be long before he is on the hill again."

"Is there anybody to take care of him?" said Clara.

"Yes, his mother stops with him; but, poor body, she is very frail, and not able to do much; but everybody is kind; and Mr Stewart, that's Donald's master, has been to see him every day."

In the meantime, while discoursing to the children, Mrs Forbes kept hovering round the table, with true Highland hospitality, pressing the children to eat, filling empty tea-cups, loading with scones, butter, and honey, half empty plates, till, unable to convince her that they could eat no more, they resolutely pushed back their chairs.

In a few minutes Mr Melville returned, and after taking a cup of tea, and talking to Mrs Forbes, while the dog-cart was

getting ready, he set off homewards with the children.

It was the cool gray evening when they drove towards the manse. Mr Melville did not talk much to them. He only told them, in answer to their inquiries, that the shepherd was better. Frank also, who sat beside his father, was silent; but Elizabeth and Clara carried on a conversation together.

"I wish," said Clara, "that Mrs Forbes had not talked quite so much. I intended to tell your mamma something of the sermon, but, with her talking, I think it is quite gone out of my head."

"It will come back again, I daresay," said Elizabeth, "if you think over it to-night. How can you expect to remember anything just now, with such a rattling of wheels?"

"I don't mean that I don't know what the sermon was about, Elizabeth. I know it was about Jesus being the Good Shepherd, and that we should seek Him, but I feel as if I could not put it into words, and when I was listening to your papa, I felt

as if I could remember every word. I like your papa's sermons; I can always understand a good deal of them."

"So do I. I like papa's sermons, and there are some ministers who come sometimes to preach for papa who have very nice sermons too. When I say nice sermons, I mean sermons that I can understand. Now, two or three Sundays ago, when papa was away, I did not understand almost a word of the sermon I heard that day."

"Neither did I, Elizabeth, but I thought that it was because I did not quite listen. I was half thinking of other things."

"So was I for a little while, Clara. I was wondering whether the swallows in the nest at the church window had got any feathers. But I did not think of that long, and I listened afterwards with all my might; but I couldn't understand, and mamma said she thought it was rather too difficult for me. But she told me that I should always listen, and try to remember something, for she said that even in a difficult sermon children would find some things they could understand."

"Well, Elizabeth, I am going to try. You know what your papa said to us to-night?"

"I did not hear him say anything, Clara."

"In his sermon, you know what he said to children, and he meant us too, so I am going to try; and will you too, Elizabeth? I am going to try to do everything to please God—will you?"

"Clara, I have not been thinking about it, but I will think."

"Now, you know," said Clara, "it would be very nice if we all loved God, and tried to please Him; then would we not be sorry to die, and when we all died, we should be so happy in heaven. Did you know that I have a mamma in heaven?"

"Yes, Clara, mamma told me."

"I think sometimes, Elizabeth, how nice it would be to see mamma; but I should not like to leave papa, he would feel lonely; I hope we may both go to heaven at the same time."

"Clara," said Elizabeth, "I hope your

papa will not take you away for a long time. I do not like to think that you are ever going away. I wish your papa would build a house in this part of the country, and stay here."

"I wish he would," said Clara; "I should like to stay here much better than at Ashgrove, if only papa were here. But look, there is the manse gate; how fast the horse must have gone!"

When the girls went to their rooms, Clara gave Mary an account of what she had heard and seen, saying as much in praise of Glen Darroch as Mary could have wished, commending Mrs Forbes's hospitality, and declaring that she thought it much pleasanter to listen to a sermon out of doors than in a church.

With regard to the latter part of her speech, Mary said that, though it might be very pleasant to sit out of doors on a fine summer evening, yet that, upon the whole, it was decidedly better that there should be churches, seeing that there were few Sabbaths in the year on which one could sit on the grass.

CHAPTER XI.

"MAMMA," said Mary one day, "when will you allow me to make some puddings and other things, sponge-cake, and biscuits?"

"When you are older, Mary, I shall be very glad to employ you in that way, but, in the meantime, you must attend to lessons. During your holidays—for you shall have a week or two soon—you may, if you like, learn to make some of these things. The more you know of housekeeping, the better you will be able to help me when you are older."

"I can help you just now, mamma."

"So you can, and you do so; but I do not wish much help at present. You

could not give me much, without neglecting other things of great importance; for, at your age, it is necessary that time should be given to study very regularly. You can help me best by being very industrious at your lessons, and very orderly in those things of which you have charge—I mean your own dress, and your own chest of drawers.”

“ Ah, mamma,” said Mary, “ I am afraid I am not quite tidy yet — not regularly tidy. Sometimes my drawers get quite into disorder, and I get very careless for a few days, and tumble things in and take them out any way; and then, perhaps, I take a desperate fit of tidiness, and put everything straight, except that some things will not look smooth, they have been so creased and rumpled. And when I feel so tidy, I put things into my drawers so neatly, and I am as particular as you could be, mamma, and I have not a crooked thing in my room; and at other times, I don’t much mind how the chairs stand, or whether the toilet-table is tidy or not.”

“Well, I hope you will endeavour to make the fits of tidiness habitual, and then you will never require to make any of these extraordinary rightings up.”

“I don’t know if I should feel very comfortable, mamma, if I were always very tidy. When I have a fit of neatness, I never feel quite at rest in my room. I can’t settle; I am always-getting up to put things straight, or to pick up a pin, or to smooth something or another.”

“My dear Mary, how ridiculous! That is not tidiness. Your room ought certainly to be neat—but to think of constantly getting up to put such trifles right, is wasting time, besides getting into the habit of thinking of trifles to the neglect of higher things. If you put everything into your drawers neatly folded during the week, and give them a general inspection on Saturday, it is quite sufficient; and if you lay anything out of your hand upon the toilet-table straight at the time, you may safely leave it alone. I should not like you, in the endeavour to be tidy, to get into a habit of being disturbed by trifles. You must

endeavour neither to be careless nor too precise."

A few mornings after this, Mrs Melville received a note, informing her that a dear friend, who lived a few miles off, was very ill, and wished to see her. Mrs Melville prepared to set off immediately ; and, as Mr Melville was also going, she spoke to the children, told them she would probably return in the evening ; at all events, that their papa would do so ; and she begged them to be kind to each other, and to do nothing that they thought their papa and she would not approve of. The children promised to do as she told them.

About an hour after Mrs Melville set off, the children had finished their forenoon lessons. The boys went out to the garden, but the girls remained within doors.

" I wish we could do something to help mamma," said Elizabeth. " I heard her say the other day that she must have the things in that closet dusted. I think I might do it for her to-day."

" Oh, Elizabeth, no," said Mary, " that would never do. The best china is in

that closet, and a number of other things, that I am absolutely certain mamma would not like to have touched."

"But she never said anything, Mary."

"No; but I am sure she would not like us to do that."

"And you know," said Clara, "that she said we were not to do anything that we thought she would not approve of, and I am sure she would not like us to touch the things in that closet."

"Well, well," said Elizabeth, "don't lecture away at me in that way; I am not going to do it; but I must do something else. I will dust every individual book in the study, except those on the top shelves. I won't touch anything on the study table; so papa will have no objections."

As books are not brittle articles, like best china, Mary said nothing against this; so Elizabeth got a duster, and went to the study.

"What are you going to do, Mary?" said Clara.

"I don't know," said Mary. "Mamma

has five or six coarse towels in that drawer which are to be hemmed, and there is the border under the drawing-room window that wants weeding. George has been busy lately ; we should do that."

" I will help you with the towels if you like, or I will weed the border, whichever you please."

" Let us both go to the border, Clara, and we will finish it soon, and then we can come in and hem the towels. I should like to give mamma a pleasant surprise."

Mary and Clara set off to the garden with hoes and rakes. The weeds came out with tolerable ease ; but by the time the border was neatly raked, it was nearly dinner-time.

Just as they were entering the door, they heard a scream and a heavy fall. The sound proceeded from the study ; and on reaching it, which they did at the same time as two of the servants, they found Elizabeth lying on the floor, the stool and chair on which she had been mounted being overturned beside her. When they attempted to raise her, they found that she

was stunned by the fall. Mary ran for some Eau de Cologne, and put some on her face ; but before Mary applied the Eau de Cologne, Jessie had bathed Elizabeth's face and hands with cold water, and she soon recovered her consciousness.

"Miss Elizabeth," said Jessie, "you will kill yourself some day, and that will be an end of all your climbing upon chairs and tables, and dusting book-shelves, as if I could not do that. And what will my master say when he comes home, and sees everything upside down in his study?"

"He will be very glad that I am not killed," said Elizabeth, trying to get up and walk.

"You are not fit to walk," said Jessie ; "you will just come up-stairs, Miss Elizabeth, and lie down for an hour or two."

"I daresay I will," said Elizabeth, "for I feel as if I could not run ; and there is a great lump on the side of my head."

Elizabeth was conveyed very carefully up-stairs ; for, although Jessie was very earnest in reproving Elizabeth for her many delinquencies, she was, in general, very

tender-hearted, and could not bear to see any one in pain, without doing something to give relief. So Elizabeth was laid down, her hair unplaited, and a wet sponge laid against the lump on the side of her head; for it was now becoming rather formidable in size. Vinegar and Eau de Cologne were also tried by turns; the first being patronised by Jessie, who had a high opinion of its virtues in subduing such lumps as that on Elizabeth's head; the second being Mary's favourite specific.

"I feel a great deal better," said Elizabeth in a few minutes; "the sick feeling is quite gone away; so, Clara, you need not hold that smelling-bottle to my nose any longer. Oh, Jessie," she continued, "I wish you would put a towel round my neck, for the sponge is very wet, and the water is running down under my frock, and making me quite uncomfortable."

Jessie brought a towel, and arranged it round Elizabeth's neck; and as the dinner-bell then rang, the rest of the children prepared to go down-stairs.

"I think you had better have no din-

ner, Miss Elizabeth," said Jessie. "I am not sure that it would be good for you. I'll bring you some nice arrow-root in a little, or some tea and toast."

"No dinner, Jessie! Why, do you know I am as hungry as possible? the tumble in the study has not done me a bit of harm. Frank," she continued, as her brother entered the room, "don't you think I may have some dinner? Jessie thinks it will do me harm."

"Let me feel your pulse," said Frank. "Quite regular, and calm," he continued, with a grave face. "Do you feel hungry?"

"Very hungry, sir," said Elizabeth.

"Then," continued Frank, turning to Jessie, "you will let this young lady have some dinner to-day; plain roast mutton, or indeed anything that there is on the dinner-table, and a few gooseberries."

"Very well, sir," said Jessie, half laughing; "if my mistress thinks this is wrong, it is not my fault—I cannot help-it."

"No, indeed, you cannot, and I shall undertake that your mistress will not find

fault with you. Now, Elizabeth," said Frank, resuming his usual tone, "I am going down-stairs, and I shall send you up some dinner."

About half an hour after dinner, Clara came up-stairs, and sat beside Elizabeth for a little; and then, as Elizabeth said she was quite well, they went down-stairs together to the dining-room, where Mary had arranged that they were to work that afternoon, and hem the towels. There were six towels in all.

"We can do two each," said Clara; "and they are so coarse, that we may soon have them finished'."

"Elizabeth cannot do as much as we can," said Mary. "I shall hem two towels and a half, you may hem two, and that will leave one and a half for Bessie."

Elizabeth set to work with great spirit, but she found that the slight stooping of her head brought on headache, and she was obliged to give up working, and lean back on a cushion. "I shall work in a little, when I feel better," she said.

"She need not work at all," said Clara.

"I daresay we may finish them before tea ; I will work very hard."

At four o'clock, Kenneth and James looked into the dining-room, and said that Mr Stewart had come to ask them to walk with him, and that they were going to take a long walk before tea.

"I am very glad you are going," said Mary, "it will keep you out of mischief."

Elizabeth managed to hem one side of a towel ; Clara did the other, in addition to her own self-imposed task ; while Mary hemmed three towels, and so finished the half-dozen before tea.

"Now, I am going to get tea," said Mary ; "how comfortable it is to feel that the work is done ! You don't stir, Elizabeth ; you must sit and be attended to. Clara, you will see that Elizabeth does nothing but lean back, for her head aches, and she is not to be going about, making it worse."

"Now, Elizabeth, dear," said Clara, sitting down on a stool at her feet, "I am going to sit close beside you, to amuse you. If you don't like to hear me talk, I shall

not talk ; but if it does not hurt you, I shall speak to you till tea is ready."

" You may talk to me as much as you please, Clara ; it will not disturb me a bit, nor hurt my head ; it is not that kind of headache. Tell me something about Ashgrove ; is it anything like this place, now ?"

" Not the very least, Bessie. There are no high hills, with heather and rocks, near it. There is one place that I used to call a hill, and everybody else too, but there is a cart road right over the top of it ; I dare say a carriage might be driven too ; and the fields come up the hill to the very edge of the road."

Here Clara stopped to indulge in a laugh at the idea of any place with a road over its summit being called a hill.

" Only fancy our calling that a hill, Elizabeth !"

" You did not know any better then ; but had you no river near the house ?"

" No ; about a mile from the house there was the Humber, and it used to look very pretty from the top of that hill, or from the bank above the dale where we often used

to walk ; but when you came close to it, you saw nothing but mud for a great way out ; you could not go down to the edge of the water as you do here ; besides, the Humber is a very large river."

" And the house, Clara ? "

" It is a very nice house, Elizabeth ; though I daresay you will think it strange when I tell you that it is a brick house, for I never see brick houses here. "

" A brick house, Clara ! that must look very strange. "

" No, it does not. The brick is not bright red, but dark ; I suppose because it has been built for a long time—papa says more than a hundred years. There are such curious pretty windows, with beautiful roses and other flowers growing round them ; and there is an approach with such tall old trees ; in summer their branches almost meet across the road high up, and make it quite shady. "

" Have you a garden, Clara ? "

" A very large one, with apricots and peaches, and all the common fruit besides. But, Elizabeth, what is that ? Who can

be coming here? I saw a shadow pass the window."

In a minute after, the dining-room door opened, and a youth of seventeen entered, with a fishing-rod in his hand, and a basket over his shoulder.

"Oh, cousin Tom," said Elizabeth, "we could not think who it was. Clara saw your shadow as you passed the window."

"Who is Clara?" said Tom, slipping off his fishing-basket, and laying it down.

"Clara Stanley, at present sitting beside me—I shall introduce you. Mr Tom Murray, allow me to introduce you to Miss Clara Stanley."

Mr Tom Murray made a low bow. "I see there are preparations for tea," he said. "Where is aunt? Is she up-stairs, or down-stairs, or where?"

"She is not at home. Mamma was obliged to go from home to-day, and papa went with her; but I think she will come back this evening; at all events, papa will. We did not know you were coming to-day."

"No ; I sent a note to uncle two days ago—at least I wrote it, and intended to put it into the post, and I found it in my coat pocket this morning. I suppose I may have that little room up-stairs that I had last time?"

"You had better ask Mary to shew you up-stairs ; she is housekeeper in mamma's absence."

"Where is she?" said Tom.

"She is wandering somewhere about the passages, I suppose, looking after Kenneth and James."

"And what is the matter with you, Bessie, that you are sitting in that great chair doing nothing? Have you been fighting, and got a broken head?"

"No, but I had a fall to-day when I was dusting the book-shelves in papa's study. I was standing upon a stool which I had placed on a chair, and the stool slipped, and I fell."

"Served you right ; what business had you to stand on a stool and a chair? If I were your papa," continued Tom, lifting his fishing-basket, "I would give you a

double punishment—first, for touching my books ; secondly, for mounting a stool and chair.”

“Papa is not quite so hard-hearted,” said Elizabeth ; “ I do not expect any punishment at all.”

Tom left the room, and returned in a few minutes, just as his uncle and aunt entered.

“ Tom, this is an unexpected pleasure,” said his uncle, shaking hands ; “ but why did you not write, and we would have made some preparations for your arrival ? ”

“ The truth is, uncle, that I did write two days ago, but I forgot to put the letter into the post-office ; I found it in my pocket this morning.”

Mr Melville shook his head, and smiled.
“ Then how did you come ? ”

“ I sent my portmanteau and carpet-bag by a cart that was passing this way, and walked across the moor. I fished down the burn, and I have a basketful of trouts. I have just sent them to the kitchen.”

“ You must be very hungry, and quite

ready for tea," said Mrs Melville. "Had you any dinner to-day?"

"Yes, aunt, I had an early dinner. I had something before I set out on my journey here; but, as I have been in the open air since one o'clock, I feel rather hungry, and shall astonish you at tea."

"I am not easily astonished, Tom," said his aunt; "I am accustomed to feats of the kind you contemplate. Sit down, and rest on the sofa; you must be tired. Tea will be ready directly, and, in the meantime, I must look after household affairs. First of all, I should like to know how my little Elizabeth hurt her head."

"All that I heard was, that she had fallen and hurt herself, and that she was now better."

"How did you manage to fall, Elizabeth."

"She was rather too aspiring, aunt," said Tom, "and got upon a stool and chair in uncle's study, and the consequence was, that she came down."

"What were you doing in my study, Elizabeth?" said her papa.

“Dusting the shelves. I did not touch a single article upon the table; but I knocked over some books, and I am very sorry for it.”

“Remember that you are never to do such a thing again. You might have been killed to-day, or, at all events, seriously injured. I wonder Mary allowed you to do such a rash thing as to put a stool upon a chair covered with haircloth, where it was sure to slip.”

“Dear papa, Mary knew nothing about it; I did it all myself.”

“Were you much hurt?”

“No, not very much; my head did ache a good deal at the time, and it aches still a little, but it was not very bad.”

“I think, Elizabeth,” said her mamma, “that you must have forgotten what I said before I left you to-day, that you were to do nothing of which you thought papa and I would not approve.”

“I did not think the stool would slip, mamma, and I did it to please papa. We were all trying to do something for you to-day, but my thing has not been right, and

I could not help Mary much afterwards with what she and Clara were doing."

"What was that?"

"Hemming the coarse towels, mamma. Mary and Clara weeded your border under the drawing-room window, after lesson-time in the forenoon, and they hemmed the towels in the afternoon, but I could only hem half a towel."

"You did as much as you then could, my dear," said her mamma, "and I hope you have learned a little prudence to-day. It was a sad error in judgment to think of pleasing papa by anything which required you to mount as you did to-day. You will remember not to do so again?"

"Yes, mamma, I will not go near the book-shelves again without asking leave."

"I hope no more accidents have occurred in our absence?" said Mrs Melville.

"No, mamma," said Elizabeth. "The boys were in the garden till dinner; and at four o'clock, Kenneth and James went to walk with Mr Stewart. No one did anything wrong but myself."

Mrs Melville left the room to give some

orders to Jessie; and as she had not seen Mary, she looked into her little room on her way down-stairs. She opened the door, and glanced into the small apartment. Mary was not there; and as Mrs Melville turned to go away, her eye was caught by a volume in a gay paper cover which lay on the little table. She turned back, lifted the volume, and glanced over a passage or two. It was a worthless tale. For a moment Mrs Melville felt deeply grieved from the thought that arose in her mind, that perhaps Mary had been reading that volume, well knowing that no book was permitted to be read by the children that had not first been thoroughly looked over either by their papa or mamma. How Mary had become possessed of the book, Mrs Melville could not imagine; and after reflecting for a moment, she began to consider that probably Mary had not opened the volume, and that, in whatever way she had become possessed of it, she could not have been conscious of doing wrong, or she would not have left it thus openly on her toilet-table. So Mrs Melville laid the

book down where she found it, and, before leaving the room, looked again at the table. Everything was perfectly neat. In front of the looking-glass were two pretty cut crystal bottles, which Mary had at different times received as gifts from cousins. Between them was a very neat pincushion, in which the pins were stuck in a very orderly manner. In this pincushion was the only article of jewellery that Mary possessed, a little shawl-pin that had been given to her by her aunt. On one side of the table lay her Bible, a gift from her mother on her sixth birthday. Beside it lay a little book of texts. On the opposite side of the table lay the volume in question. Mrs Melville left the room, determined, in the meantime, to say nothing to Mary, but to wait until she herself spoke of the book.

When she went down-stairs, she found that Mary had been looking for her, and after speaking to her for a minute or two, Mrs Melville sat down to tea. All the family had assembled, and Elizabeth, who seemed quite convalescent, and whose spirits were by no means depressed by

her fall, joined the circle at the tea-table.

"I hope you intend to work hard while you are with us, Tom?" said his uncle.

"Are you not a little hard upon me, uncle?" said Tom; "I wish you would let me have some holidays while I am here. I assure you I have been working very hard. I have read so much Latin this summer, that really I shall soon begin to feel as if I were an ancient Roman, and wonder that I do not wear the toga."

"Have you really worked hard?"

"I have, I do assure you, uncle. I am not jesting, so I hope I am to have a few holidays here. This is far too beautiful a place to work in. I shall do anything else you wish for ten days or a fortnight. Give me charge of the children, aunt, in their play-hours, and I shall exercise them on the hill-sides, and save you a world of trouble in looking after them. I shall garden for you (I am a first-rate gardener), or make hay, or, in short, do anything out of doors. Put in a word for me, aunt."

"Your uncle is not disposed to be very hard, Tom."

"Oh no," said Mr Melville; "but I do not like to see youths idle during such a long vacation as you have at college, Tom. It was different when you were at school, and worked for a session of ten months at appointed tasks; but now that you are a youth of seventeen, you are expected to do a great deal to improve yourself."

"And so I shall, uncle; I do not wish to be idle altogether. I shall read a certain portion every day, though not so much as I have been doing, and aunt and I shall botanise a little. You will talk wisely to me, and one way or another, I shall be much improved before I leave this."

"You are to stay here for a long time, cousin Tom," said James; "for a month and more."

"The longer the better, my little cousin. Uncle and aunt must send me away when they think I have been here long enough; for Inverallan is such a pleasant place, that I never know when to leave it."

"But, Tom," said his aunt, "you know we often find fault with you."

"I don't object to being found fault with when I do wrong, aunt, if it is done in a reasonable manner; but I hate being lectured, and scolded, and worried all day long. The state of mind that it throws me into is often a great deal worse than the first fault."

"But you should remember that you are rather a prejudiced judge in such a case, and that people reprove you for your good."

"Not a bit, uncle; they do it sometimes only because they are angry. If they did it for my good, they would do it in a different way."

"Well, well, you must not talk in this way any longer just now, or it will not be for our good. You can tell me your sentiments about the different styles of reproof some other time."

"So I shall, uncle; it is a subject that has occupied my mind lately."

"I shall be very glad to hear your sentiments privately," said Mr Melville.

"Now, I really must say to you, aunt,

as I hear some ladies say sometimes—
‘Where do you get your tea, Mrs Melville? It is very good.’ It has wrought wonders on me, for I am quite rested and refreshed, and able for any amount of labour to-night. I’ll relieve you of all these youngsters at present. Come, young people,” said Tom, getting up, and preparing to leave the room, “you all come with me to the garden. I wish to see what improvements have been made since last summer. I suppose they may all come, aunt?”

“Oh yes, except Bessie. I must look at this lump on her head.”

“Mamma, may I go too? I am quite better; the only thing I cannot bear is to have the hair pulled back in any way from the place where the lump is.”

“No, dear; I should like you to remain with me for a few minutes at least; perhaps I may allow you to go out after that.”

“Very well,” said Tom, “you can follow us, Bessie. Come with me, Miss Clara,” continued he, “you are under my charge as well as the rest, now, and at any time that my aunt chooses to deliver

you over to me." And so saying, Tom and his cousins, and Clara, left the room.

In the evening, when the girls went up to bed, Mrs Melville also went up-stairs with them. She accompanied them to their rooms, and after remaining with them for a minute or two, she wished them good-night, and was about to go down-stairs, when Mary said, " Oh, mamma, I have something that I wish to tell you about. You remember that Saturday that we spent at Mrs Williamson's? There were two girls at the Grove that day, that had come to spend a few weeks with Mrs Williamson, and one of them told me that she had a number of nice books, and she asked me if I read many story books. I said that I read some, but not a very great many, and that you and papa did not like us to read any books but those you had seen. She told me a story that she had read the day before, but I did not think that it was very interesting. Well, this afternoon I found a parcel addressed to me on the hall-table, and when I opened it, there was this book, and a note from the girl, saying that the

book was a present from her, that it was a very nice story, and asking me to read it without shewing it to you, mamma. I did not wish her to send me a book, and she should not have asked me to read it without shewing it to you. I laid it down here, and I forgot it after tea with going to the garden with Tom. Will you take it away, mamma, and tell me what I should do?"

"I think you should return it to the giver, Mary; and, in the meantime, I will take it with me."

"Is it not a proper book for me, mamma?"

"Not at all, my dear. I saw it this afternoon when I went to your room to look for you, and looked at it for a moment or two. It seems to be a very worthless tale, such as I would never put into the hands of any one. It could do you no good to read it, and might, nay, it certainly would, do you a great deal of harm. So good-night, my dear, and we shall talk of what is to be done with the book to-morrow."

Next forenoon, when Mary had finished her lessons, Mrs Melville told her that she wished her to write a note to the girl who had sent her the book.

"What shall I say, mamma?" said Mary.

"You can say, my dear, that neither your papa nor I approve of your reading such books, and that you have no wish to read any book unknown to your parents."

"But, mamma, dear, I do not like to write that to Miss Wilson. Could you not burn the book, and it could do no harm to anybody?"

"But would your silence do no harm, Mary? Might not Miss Wilson imagine that you really had read the book, and read it unknown to me. Probably you might never see her again to undeceive her, and you would thus lose for ever the opportunity you have at present of doing her good; for perhaps it may do her good, if you firmly refuse to have anything to do with such a book as she has sent you. We are commanded by God to abstain from the appearance of evil; and

although, by burning the book, you might avoid evil yourself, you would not be abstaining from the appearance of it. I daresay it will be a little unpleasant to write the note; but you must never allow any little selfish shrinking to come between you and duty. You may not exactly understand why papa and I are so particular about what you read, but you will understand by and by, and will, no doubt, thank us for our care. You know I have often told you how much all human beings are moulded by the things they see and hear, by the books they read, and by the society they keep. And if this is true of grown persons, whose characters, according to a common phrase, are formed—and I must allow that they are formed to a certain extent—it is much more true of children. In the minds of grown persons there are often certain habits of thought, and fixed principles, that make outward influences much less powerful than they would otherwise be, but that is very seldom the case with children. Their minds are very easily impressed; and while that

makes youth the best time for sowing the good seed, it makes it also a time when parents and teachers must watch lest anything evil should be introduced. The conversation of vain, frivolous people, teaches children to be vain and frivolous, so does the reading of vain and frivolous books. You know that I would not allow you to associate with unprincipled people, who have no knowledge of what duty means, who have no fear of God before their eyes, who could only teach you what is evil. Neither can I allow you to read books in which characters are described worse than any you have any chance of meeting in real life. It would do you much more harm than seeing such characters in real life would do, for you would have friends to tell you about them, and warn you. But when you read a tale, no one can sit over you, and warn you against one thing and another."

"Well, mamma, dear, I will write the note directly; I am quite contented not to read that book, for you know best. How shall we send the parcel?"

"If you are inclined for a long walk, you may come with me this afternoon. We shall go in the direction of the Grove, and leave the parcel at the lodge."

In the afternoon, Mrs Melville and the three girls walked as far as the lodge at the Grove. Mrs Melville called first at some cottages that were near, and after remaining there a short time, she went on with the girls to the lodge. They left the book and note with the old woman who opened the gate, and then turned to go home. They had not gone far from the lodge, when they met Miss Wilson, the donor of the book, and her sister. They stopped and spoke to them.

Mary turned to Miss Wilson and said, in a low tone of voice, "I got your book yesterday, and I am much obliged to you; but mamma does not like me to read such books, so I have sent it back. I wrote a note, and we have just been leaving the book and the note at the lodge." Miss Wilson looked a little offended, and said, "Oh, very well."

"My dear," said Mrs Melville, turning

to the eldest Miss Wilson, "although I am not acquainted with you, you must allow me to say a few words to you. I saw the book you sent to Mary; and although I have never read it myself, yet, from the few pages at which I glanced, I could perceive that it was not a book that any one should read. Now I suppose, from your sending it to my little girl, that you have read it yourself, and perhaps some more of the same kind?"

Now, it is very possible that Miss Wilson might not have listened patiently to every stranger who chose to address her, but there was something so winning in Mrs Melville's clear bright glance, and the sweet tones of her voice, that Maria Wilson only said, in answer to her last remark, "I read a great many stories such as that—indeed I have a great many, for there is a gentleman who often comes to see papa, and he knows that I love reading, and he brings me a book very often."

"Very probably he does not know what sort of books they are, my dear?"

"I don't think he knows anything about

them. I heard him tell papa one evening that he never read anything but newspapers, and that he did not know what sort of books to ask for in a shop, so he just tells the bookseller that he wishes to have two or three books, and he takes whatever the man in the shop gives him."

"And so you are fond of reading?" said Mrs Melville.

"Very fond of it," said Miss Wilson; "I could read all day long, and never tire."

"And do you read only tale-books?"

"When I can get them," said Maria Wilson, "for I like them best; but I read other things too."

"What other things?"

"History and poetry. I have read almost all Hume's *History of England*, and I have read the *History of Scotland*; but papa has not many books in his library, and I have read all the interesting books long ago."

"Did no one ever tell you that such constant reading of tales would do you harm?" said Mrs Melville.

"Nobody ever looks at the books I

read. I did not know there was any harm in reading tale-books."

"Then, my dear, will you tell me why you said to Mary that she need not shew the book to me?"

"Because," said Maria, colouring, "some one said that you and Mr Melville were very particular, and that you never let your children read an amusing book."

"What a story!" said Elizabeth, indignantly.

"Well, supposing that were true, was it right to tempt Mary to disobedience and concealment?"

"No," said Maria, looking down, with tears in her eyes.

Mrs Melville had again turned in the direction of the Grove, and she said to Maria Wilson, who was walking at her side, "I daresay you think me rather a strange person to lecture you in this way; but it is out of love to you that I speak to you, and because I should be very glad to do you some good. You are fond of reading, and I am aware that many people very thoughtlessly praise a young girl for

being fond of reading, without considering that, unless she reads profitable things, her love of reading may be a great temptation to sin. You remember, I daresay, the first question in the *Shorter Catechism*, 'What is the chief end of man?' and the answer: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.' Now, if it be our chief end to glorify God, should we not keep from those things that would hinder us from glorifying or serving Him?"

"Yes," said Maria.

"Well, my dear, I do not know anything that hinders young people from serving God more than the reading of foolish and sinful books does. It is impossible to think seriously of our souls when our hearts and minds are filled with folly. And it is equally impossible to fulfil properly the most common duties of life, when we are engrossed with foolish stories of things that never happened. I may appeal to yourself to confirm it. Did you never feel it tiresome to be called away from the story you were reading to do some duty?"

"Very often," said Maria. "If it were

not that I liked to be at the head of the class at school, I daresay I would have missed my lessons sometimes; and I read sometimes at night till the servants come and take away the light."

"And then, I suppose, you lie down with your head full of the book, instead of thinking of Jesus Christ, and all He has done for you during the day?"

"Very often I lie awake thinking of what I have read, and wishing I could get a light."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs Melville, "I told you before what a hindrance foolish reading is in the way of thinking of our souls; but I must tell you, besides, that when indulged in to any extent, it destroys the thinking faculties, and renders people quite incapable of acting with energy and decision. It puts a stop to improvement of the mind, and renders us listless and inactive in everything except the favourite pursuits. You know what the consequences would be if your body were constantly fed with dainties; you would not only have a distaste for plain and wholesome food,

but would be thrown into a state of bad health. So, if the mind be constantly fed with dainties, in the shape of tales, it will not only have a dislike for all good and wholesome reading, but will actually become diseased."

"Should I never read any story-books at all?" said Maria. "All the girls I know read them."

"I do not mean that you should never read anything in the shape of a tale at all, my dear," said Mrs Melville; "but I think you should read with great moderation, and only such books as your conscience tells you are such that you could shew to every one.

"Such a book as that you sent to Mary you should never read. There are many nice books for young people published now, far more than when I was a child, and you should ask your papa to get some of those for you that are suited to young people. From your love of reading, you are peculiarly liable to be led away by foolish books; and you should endeavour to read a great deal less, and only such

books as you know no one could find fault with. Try to remember that the love of reading, the desire to gain information, are talents for which you must give an account to God, and do not waste them in folly. I am afraid you are rather tired of this lecture, but you must remember, my dear, that the great interest I take in all young people, is one reason why I spoke to you this evening. I am truly glad that I met you, and perhaps you will think of what I have said to you, and excuse me for speaking so freely.

"I see my girls have gone on a little way with your sister; we must make up to them. Do you make a long stay at the Grove?"

"We go home to-morrow," said Maria.

"Then you will not be able to come and see us at the manse?" said Mrs Melville.

"You would have seen," continued she, "that we are not so very particular as you have heard. We have a nice little library. You will let me send you and your sister a little book? I have one that I think would please you; I shall send it to the Grove to-morrow."

"Thank you," said Maria; "I am very much obliged to you."

"Not at all, my dear; and next time you pay a visit to Mrs Williamson, I hope you will come and see me. I shall be very glad to see both you and your sister."

The girls, who were in advance, had turned, and now met Mrs Melville and Maria. After exchanging a few words, and a kind farewell, the party separated, the Wilsons to walk up the approach to the Grove, and Mrs Melville and her three girls to return home.

After they had walked a few steps, Mary said, "Mamma, did you know that Maria and Fanny Wilson have no mother? Their mother died about two years ago."

"No, my dear, I did not know that; but it accounts for their being allowed to do as they choose in some things. I daresay their papa is engaged in business all day, and has not time to look after them; and I should imagine that they have not a governess."

"No, they go to a school as day boarders, mamma. They learn all their lessons

at school, and come home at night about eight o'clock, so that they have no lessons to learn at home except on Saturdays."

"I was talking to Maria Wilson," said Mrs Melville, "about the harm of reading foolish books, and I hope she may think of what I said, for, poor girl, I am afraid that, if her papa is very busy, and much occupied in thinking of other things, she has no one to look after her, and remind her of her duty, as all you dear children are reminded. She seems to have a pleasant temper, and did not appear at all displeased that I spoke to her about her faults, although I was a stranger."

"How could she be angry with you, mamma," said Elizabeth, "for you spoke very gently?"

"But I know some one who is angry with me sometimes, even when I speak gently."

"Never, dearest mother, except when I am in a passion beforehand, and then I don't know what I am about."

"Then I hope, Elizabeth, you will never again get into a passion. It is sad not to know what you are about."

"Am I not better, mamma, than I was some time ago? I have not felt very angry for a long time."

"I think there is a decided improvement, Elizabeth; and, talking of improvement, we must tell your papa, Clara, that you are making progress in your studies. You are much more steady and industrious. I tell you this, my dear, to encourage you to make further efforts. I suppose nurse will be delighted to hear of improvement in the needlework."

"I should like very much," said Clara, "if you would not say anything about my work to papa, because he will tell nurse, and I wish to surprise her with that cap when it is finished."

"Well, my dear, I shall say nothing about the work, since you wish me not; and as soon as the cap is completed, you will send it off to nurse."

"How shall we send it?"

"By post," said Mrs Melville; "it will not make a very heavy parcel, and it will go more speedily in that way than any other."

"I hope nurse may like the cap," said Clara, "and think it neatly made. What a torment I used to be to her with my work! I used to hate working then; I think it was because there was no one to talk to, for, if I said a word, nurse used to say, 'Mind your work, Miss Clara.'"

"How tiresome that must have been!" said Elizabeth; "what did you do?"

"Sometimes I got cross," said Clara, "and broke my thread, and took long stitches, and then I had everything to take out again; but I feel ashamed to say any more."

"I daresay you would not do so now," said Mrs Melville; "you know better how to work, and would not feel so much tempted to think it tiresome."

"Did you know many little girls at Ashgrove, Clara?" said Elizabeth.

"No, except at school; there were some very nice girls there, but I only saw them at school; for at home I saw little girls very seldom."

"Had you nobody to play with?"

"No; I used to have long walks with papa. Papa walked, and I rode on my donkey, and when I was tired riding, I got off and walked, and sometimes it was quite late before we got home. Then papa and I used to have some tea together, although my own tea was always about papa's dinner-time; and after tea, papa often told me a story before I went to bed. When papa comes here, you will see how very nice he is—he is very funny."

"What did you think of our papa when you saw him?" said Mary.

"When he first spoke to me, I thought he was very nice and kind; but guess where I saw him first!" Here Clara recounted her evening adventure, when she got out of bed, and stood like a small Indian warrior, with the counterpane around her, at the window of her room, the night of Mr Melville's arrival. Her hearers were highly amused, particularly with her description of the rapid manner in which nurse sent her to bed.

As they drew near the manse, they perceived Tom Murray and Frank at some

distance, returning from a walk which they had been taking.

"Where did cousin Tom come from yesterday, mamma?" said Elizabeth; "he said he had fished down the burn."

"He has been staying for the last few weeks with some of his papa's relations, who live not far from this, but still where he could not get the coach; and I suppose he would not let them send him over in a gig, but preferred taking the short cut across the hills, and sending his portman-teau by the road."

"They are not our relations at all, mamma, although they are Tom's?"

"No," said Mrs Melville; "Tom has two sets of cousins, just as you have,"

CHAPTER XII.

SUMMER was passing away, and the fields were waving with corn, that was gradually assuming a yellow tinge. Small square patches on the mountain-sides, that had been green all summer, now began to shew, from their changing colour, that they were the limits of man's dominion on the hills; for beyond were the green slopes that had been pastures from time immemorial, or the grey rocks and heather, the abode of the wild birds of the hills. The hay had all been gathered in, except in some of the high glens, where every season, except winter, is later than in the lowlands below. The mountain-ash was covered with its red berries, the bloom of the early purple heather, and bog heather was past; but the

grey heath of the hills and moors was deeply luxuriant, reaching in many places beyond the knees of the travellers who passed through it. The dews at night were often heavy, and sometimes, in the morning, wise people shook their heads, and said that the dew of the last night had made a very close approach to frost. Farmers talked of harvest, and wished for fine weather; sportsmen thought of grouse, and the coming twelfth; and the young people at Inverallan thought of a promised expedition with Tom Murray, who had now been at the manse for two or three weeks. They had all been very steady at their studies for some time past. Clara's cap had been finished, and sent off to nurse; Tom Murray had read a due amount of Greek and Latin; and as Mr Stewart had left Inverallan for some time, and gone to the south, Frank and his brothers and sisters had no other lessons than those which Mr Stewart had given them to prepare during their holidays, and which were generally finished before ten o'clock every morning. So, one fine morn-

ing early in August, Mr and Mrs Melville granted a request that was made to them by all the children, with their cousin Tom Murray at their head, that they might be allowed to have a ramble on the moor, across which the road to Mrs Fraser's cottage lay, and ascend afterwards a part of the hill that lay above her cottage. Mrs Melville felt inclined not to give the desired permission, but Mr Melville said they could come to no harm if they kept strictly to the moor between Inverallan and Mrs Fraser's; but he added that they must on no account go beyond that part of the moor, for that, a little farther west, where peats had been dug, there were many deep holes filled with dark-coloured water, and that it was dangerous for such young people as James and Kenneth to be wandering near them.

"Do not be afraid, aunt," said Tom, as he saw that she still looked doubtful; "I promise you that I will not take them to the west part of the moor, nor allow any of them to go there; you may trust me. I shall bring them all safe again this evening.

You do not think there is any danger between this and Mrs Fraser's, and I am very careful."

"No, Tom, I do not know of any danger between this and Mrs Fraser's, and you are as careful a specimen of seventeen as I know, but that is not saying a great deal."

"Well, then, aunt, we may go, I suppose? And now, remember," said Tom, addressing his charge, "you must do everything I tell you—even you, Frank, old as you are—or I will not go with you."

This rather peremptory speech of Tom's meeting with entire approbation, the party went about their several occupations until the afternoon, when they set off on their expedition. Mrs Melville said she would set out to meet them about six o'clock.

They set off in great spirits. Tom had his fishing-rod and a basket with him, and he promised to lend his rod to Kenneth and James when they reached the burn that flowed past Mrs Fraser's cottage. Mary, Elizabeth, and Clara, had a basket which they carried by turns, containing biscuits and summer pears, for which the

manse garden was famed. They had not gone far across the moor, before James asked leave to fish in the burn, which, after passing Mrs Fraser's, wandered across the moor.

"Not here," said Tom; "we cannot be stopping immediately, before our journey is well begun; let us get on a little farther."

"But I saw a little fish," persisted James; "it jumped out of the water just now."

"Never mind the fish," said Tom; "come on, like a good boy, and we shall have a nice ramble on the hill. I wish I had not brought my rod."

"I really wonder you can bear to catch fish, Tom," said Mary; "it seems so cruel to do it for amusement."

"But fish must be caught, Mary, if you wish to eat them, and some one must do it."

"Well, well, Tom," said Mary, "I cannot argue with you, but I think you might find something better to do."

James, who had been walking a little behind, now began to amuse himself by

leaping over the burn, which, dividing in one place into two channels, could be easily leaped over in one or other of the channels, even by James. This leaping over the burn did not, however, promise a speedy progress in their journey ; so, after speaking to James several times ineffectually, Elizabeth at last appealed to Tom, who immediately issued orders to James to desist ; but James resolved to have one parting leap, and, making great preparations for it, sprang before Tom could reach him. The bank on the opposite side of the burn gave way with his foot, and he fell with one shoe in the water.

“ Oh, you naughty boy ! ” said Elizabeth ; “ see what you have done ; your hands and jacket are quite dirty, and your foot has been in the water.”

“ My shoe is quite wet, and my stocking too,” said James.

“ I have a good mind to send you home, James,” said Tom ; “ did you not promise, like all the rest, that you would do what I told you ? and you jumped after I told you not, and see what has come of it. If I

could meet any one going to Inverallan, I would certainly send you back with your wet foot. Anyhow, you must be punished for disobedience of orders, so I shall not lend you my fishing-rod."

Here James began to look a little sorrowful, but Elizabeth said, "There is no use in crying; we must think what is to be done with your wet stocking, if you do not go home."

"There is a woman washing at the burn-side," said Mary; "let us go and ask her to dry James's sock."

"Tell her to be quick about it, Mary," said Tom, "or the whole afternoon will be wasted. You can come after us when you are ready; we shall only go on a few steps."

Mary took James's hand, and led him to the place where the woman was washing. She belonged to the village of Inverallan, and her cottage was at the end next the moor. When they reached her, they found that another woman was with her; and, having a large washing to perform, they had chosen to do it in this quiet spot, where

there was smooth though scanty green-sward on the bank of the little stream, and beyond, plenty of heather, on which clothes might be stretched to dry. At the place where the women were washing, the stream had widened into a clear pool, where there was sufficient depth of water to allow a pail to be dipped in, and after performing this good service, the stream went on its usual noisy course, singing among the heather. Beside the stream a small fireplace of rough stones had been raised, between the stones burned a peat fire, and on the fire was a large pot full of boiling water, that supplied the washing-tubs that were on both sides. The thick smoke from the fire was blown in the faces of the children as they approached. After speaking to the women for a minute or two, Mary told them that she had brought James to ask them to dry his sock at their fire. With great alacrity and good-will, they said that they would do so ; and one of them setting James on a large stone, took off his shoe and sock. The sock was completely wet ; and as the place where James had fallen

had been a little marshy, some wet earth had discoloured the sock. Before Mary could say anything, it was washed in one of the tubs, wrung out quickly, and the kind-hearted woman was on her knees before the fire, while the smoke almost made her blind, alternately blowing the fire with her breath, to make the peats glow, and holding the sock between both hands before it. Her companion, in the meantime, was drying the inside of James's shoe with her apron; and in a short time both shoe and sock were pronounced fit to be put on. With many thanks, Mary left her kind and obliging friends, and joined the rest of the party, who were amusing themselves at a little distance. James received many new injunctions as to obedience, to all of which he promised to attend; and he kept his promise.

The party then walked on as far as Mrs Fraser's, but they did not go in; they only spoke to Mrs Fraser at the door, and inquired for Mary, who was much the same as usual. After leaving the cottage, they went up the burn, where Kenneth, accord-

ing to promise, was permitted to use Tom's fishing-rod; but he caught no fish, and soon became tired of holding the rod. As Tom said he was not going to fish, they all proposed to climb the hill as far as they were allowed to go. Before setting out, it was deemed advisable to look at the contents of the basket, and have something to eat, which, as one of them said, would both lighten the basket and strengthen them. So they sat down in a circle on the hill-side, and placing the basket in the middle, divided the biscuits and pears.

"How very delightful this is!" said Elizabeth. "I wish we had fruit always to dinner and breakfast; it is much nicer than beef and mutton and tea."

"When I am a man," said Kenneth, "I shall go and live for a while, like Robinson Crusoe, on an island."

"You will be rather lonely," said Tom.

"I should not like to live quite alone like Robinson Crusoe," said Clara; "but it would be very nice if all of us here, and my papa, and your papa and mamma, Mary, and some of your friends, Tom,

could get to an island like Robinson Crusoe's—we would be so happy."

"Do you think so?" said Tom. "I think there would be rather too many of us to enjoy the kind of happiness that is to be found on a desert island. Besides, you just imagine you would be happy. I daresay, now, that if we were all on an island at present, we would be very glad to get out of it."

"Oh no," said Elizabeth; "think of the delight of gathering grapes, and drying them as Robinson Crusoe did, and making real raisins. How nice it would be to live in a cave, and have no servants, but go out and catch fish for the dinner, and grind corn, and make cakes!"

"Very nice, indeed," said Tom. "I daresay, Miss Elizabeth, that you think just now that it would be very pleasant to sweep out a cave with a bundle of twigs, for I never heard of brooms on a desert island; but when you are as old as I am, you will understand that it would not be quite pleasant to live where you could not get new clothes if you wished ever so

much, unless you took the skins of animals; and where you could have no books, no needles and thread, no work of any kind, but digging and grinding corn, and making cakes, as you talk of. However," continued Tom, "I was as bad, if not worse, than Kenneth at his age. I did not wish for a desert island, but I fully intended, as soon as I was a man, to go and live among the Red Indians in North America."

"Tom, how could you think of such a thing?" said Mary; "why, the North American Indians are savages!"

"Some of them, Mary; but I should not have been much worse than you and Elizabeth on the island. However, as you may see from my being at college, I gave up these intentions long ago, and intend now to settle among civilised people; and I advise Kenneth and the rest of you to do the same. Now, as we have finished our provisions, let us set off and climb the hill."

After climbing the hill as far as they knew they ought to go, they sat down on a grey rock, covered with moss, and looked

about them for a short time, while the cool mountain-breeze played around them. They then walked along the hill a little to the east, and began to descend. Near the foot of the hill at this place was a wood, composed principally of Scotch firs, with some larch-trees; and at the beginning of the wood were high rocks, some broken, with deep crevices in them, and hollows between them, and others piled one on another, making places in which a dozen people might have concealed themselves, and escaped notice, unless their hiding-place had been suspected.

When Tom Murray and his party were descending the hill, they separated into different companies, with different objects in view. Tom was engaged in describing to Frank and Mary a mountain-climbing exploit in which he had been engaged before coming to Inverallan; Elizabeth was with James, assisting him to look for something which he had dropped on the hill; while Kenneth and Clara walked on before. Tom and his auditors were so absorbed in the interesting narrative, that

they did not observe that Kenneth and Clara were out of sight. They turned back in a few minutes to meet Elizabeth, who, with James, came running towards them. When she reached them, she said, "Where are Kenneth and Clara?"

Tom looked quickly around, and said, "I saw them two or three minutes ago; they cannot be far off; we shall find them before we reach the wood at the foot of the hill." But when they came to the foot of the hill, neither Clara nor Kenneth were to be seen. Tom shouted their names till the rocks rang, but no answer came, and at last Mary said, "I daresay we shall find them at Mrs Fraser's; perhaps they thought that we were on before."

"Perhaps they are hiding somewhere," said Tom.

"Oh no," said Mary, "I don't think either Clara or Kenneth would do that."

"Well, let us get on, then," said Tom.

When they got to Mrs Fraser's, she told them that Clara and Kenneth had not been at her cottage, and she asked at what part of the hill they had come down.

"At the fir wood," said Mary.

"Well," said Mrs Fraser, "there is a road across the moor to Inverallan from that wood, and maybe, when you were looking for them in the wood, they would be going home by that road; and yonder I am thinking they are," continued Mrs Fraser, pointing across the moor to two little figures that corresponded to the respective heights of Clara and Kenneth.

"It must be they," said Mary, joyfully; "I am very glad. But you must give them a lecture, Tom, for going away without us, and taking the wrong road."

"A lecture!" said Tom; "they shall have that, and I shall never take charge of you all on the hill-side again. I have been almost frightened out of my senses."

The young people left Mrs Fraser, and set off across the moor. When they had nearly reached Inverallan, they met Mrs Melville, who immediately asked them where Kenneth and Clara were. She was told that they had gone home the other way from the fir wood, without being noticed at first. This did not satisfy

Mrs Melville, who asked how they could set off unseen by the rest. The whole facts of the case were told, and Mrs Melville returned with them, expecting to find Clara and Kenneth already at home, and fully prepared to reprove them for leaving the rest of the party, when, to her dismay, she found that they had not been seen near the manse.

She began to feel much alarmed, and to fear (although she had been told so much that should have led to a contrary opinion) that they might have strayed in the direction of the peat-holes. Had Elizabeth been with Kenneth, she would not have been so much afraid; but Clara was not well acquainted with the different landmarks, and if she once lost sight of Inverallan (which lay slightly in a hollow), she might take a wrong direction in endeavouring to seek it, and only go farther astray. Mrs Melville did not say a word of reproach to any of the others, indeed it would have been cruel to do so, for nothing could exceed their anxiety and distress. Mr Melville was not at home;

he had gone to Glen Darroch to see some of his parishioners ; but George Fergusson, with one or two of the men of the village, set out in search of the lost ones, accompanied by Tom Murray. That more men did not accompany them, was owing to the absence of most of the working-men of the village at a peat-moss at some distance, not the one that lay westward from Mrs Fraser's cottage. Mrs Melville went up the burn to that part of the road that crossed the moor from the fir wood, to look if the children had strayed in that direction.

In the meantime, where were the lost children? At the time when the party were descending the hill, Clara and Kenneth had walked on before, and as, owing to various circumstances, the rest had lingered behind, they reached the entrance of the fir wood, where the rocks were piled together, while as yet no one was in sight. Just as they reached them, they proposed to wait for the rest, and sitting down, began to look around. While thus employed, Kenneth happened to turn round,

and perceived a most inviting hiding-place between two rocks, and behind another, with soft moss and ferns growing in it.

"Oh, Clara!" he exclaimed, struck by a sudden thought, "how nice it would be to hide here for a little while from the rest! They will never guess where we are; and when they have passed by, we can run after them."

"Very well," said Clara; "but are you sure that it is quite right, Kenneth, to go and hide?"

"Oh yes," said Kenneth, "for we shall run after them directly; so come along, Clara."

In half a minute the two children were in their hiding-place, crouching among moss and ferns, and, long before Tom and the rest approached, the entrance to the fir wood was as silent as if no human being were near. In a few minutes Kenneth whispered, "I hear them coming, Clara; sit still, and don't say a word." They almost held their breath as Tom shouted to them, and did not move until the party had fairly left the wood. When Tom and

his companions had, as Kenneth and Clara imagined, passed the other entrance of the wood, they got up and stretched themselves, for their limbs were cramped with crouching in their confined hiding-place.

"I will climb this rock, Kenneth," said Clara, "and look if I can see them through the trees. I see nothing of them," continued Clara, when she had looked through the wood; "I must get down, and we shall run after them." So saying, she gave a leap from the top of the rock, and fell with her foot twisted under her. She screamed with pain, and in vain attempted to rise. Kenneth ran to her, and tried to assist her to rise.

"Oh, don't touch me," cried Clara; "my foot is so painful, I cannot move."

"Clara, dear, I am so sorry," said Kenneth; "I wish we had not thought of hiding."

"It was you that thought of hiding, Kenneth," said Clara; "I never thought of such a thing till you spoke."

"But you did it," said Kenneth;

"and you are older than I am. But we won't quarrel, Clara; is your foot better now?"

"Yes, it is a little better," said Clara, knitting her brows with pain, and holding her ankle in her hand; "but when it is a great deal better, I shall try to walk. Sit down, Kenneth, and don't cry, dear; it was not your fault that we hid. I should not have done it."

Clara's foot did not get much better, and when, in her eagerness to try to reach home, she got up, and put her foot to the ground, she grew so faint, that she was obliged to sit down, and lean against a stone; while Kenneth, in a perfect agony of terror, looked at her pale face.

"Oh! what shall we do?" he said; "I will run to the edge of the wood, and look for the others, and ask them to come and help you."

When Kenneth reached the edge of the wood, and looked around, he could see no one. Mrs Fraser's cottage was entirely hidden by the hill, and was, indeed, half a mile distant. There was not a house

nor a human being in sight, nothing but the purple moor, with here and there a large grey rock rising above the surrounding barrenness. He returned to Clara, who sat still where he had left her.

"Clara," he said, "I can see nobody. I cannot see Mrs Fraser's house, or any house; and I think Tom and the rest must have gone home."

"Oh, go to the outside of the wood, Kenneth, and call as loud as you can, and perhaps somebody will hear us."

Kenneth went and did so, his voice shrill with terror; but no one answered, and no one came; he heard nothing but the sharp cry of a hawk, that was wheeling round the brow of the hill. The little boy's heart sank within him, and he returned to Clara. He sat down beside her, and burst into tears. "We shall be left here all night," he said, "for no one knows where we are, Clara."

"Yes," said Clara, "God knows where we are; and although we have been naughty, and done what was wrong, He will forgive us if we ask Him, and take

care of us, and perhaps He will send some one to help us."

"Clara," said Kenneth, "if you would not be afraid to stay here alone, I would go and try and find somebody to come and carry you."

"No, no," cried Clara, "you know what your papa said about the peat holes! If you were to fall into one, and be drowned, what a terrible thing it would be! No; you must not go."

"Perhaps we may have to stay here all night, Clara; but it is not cold out of doors just now."

"No, Kenneth, and there are no bears and wolves in this country."

"No, Clara, but there are foxes."

"They won't touch us. Hush, Kenneth," continued Clara, laying her hand on his arm; "what was that?"

They both sat motionless, while a rustling noise continued among some ferns and fir cones, the cause of which was soon explained by the appearance of a large grey rabbit. Both the children looked at each other, and smiled.

The time wore on for a little longer; Kenneth went often to the edge of the wood, and as often returned, to say that he had seen nothing. The sun sank so low, that his beams did not reach beyond the projecting part of the hill; and the fir wood, close to which the children sat, cast deep and heavy shadows over them.

"It will soon be getting dark, Clara," said Kenneth.

"And then the moon and stars will shine, Kenneth; but I wish we had something to put over us, something to put our heads upon."

"Do you remember, Clara, Jacob took a stone for his pillow? Shall I go and look for a stone for you and me?"

"Yes, and gather some ferns, and put on it, and that will make it quite soft."

Kenneth found a stone, and began to pull some ferns; but he forgot how hard the stalks were, and was soon obliged to desist, with his fingers cut and bleeding from the sharp stems of the ferns.

"Dear Kenneth," said Clara, wrapping the bleeding fingers in her pocket-handker-

chief, "do not gather any more ferns ; we won't lie down at all ; you shall sit beside me with your back to this stone, and if we sit close together, we shall be warmer. Before you sit down for altogether, we will pray to God. I cannot kneel, Kenneth, but you will kneel, and I will pray, and you shall say the words with me."

Kenneth knelt, and repeating what Clara said, they both asked God to forgive all they had done wrong, to take care of them, and send somebody to help them.

When Kenneth rose from his knees, he sat down beside Clara. "I am afraid," he said, "that mamma will be very sorry about us ; oh how I wish she were here !—I should not feel afraid if she were here."

"And you need not feel afraid, Kenneth ; God will take care of us ; I am sure He will. Sit closer to me, and we will say some hymns. I will say one first, and then you shall say the next."

The children sat close together, and Clara repeated her favourite hymn :—

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God ;

He bears them all, and frees us
From the accurséd load.

‘I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.”

She had scarcely finished the hymn, when they heard the sound of distant voices, and then the crackling of dry twigs as people came through the wood. In another moment there was a rustling sound, and a joyful bark, and Cæsar, the watch-dog at the manse, was on the top of the children, overwhelming them with rough caresses in the very excess of his joy.

“Ay, Cæsar, so you have found them,” said a rough but pleasant voice, and John Fraser (Mary Fraser’s father) emerged from the wood, followed by George Fergusson, one or two other men, and Tom Murray. “A bonnie plisky ye have played us,” he continued, addressing the children, “sitting here sae comfortable, and we have been searching the moor, ay, and looking

into some of the peat-holes. What for did ye no come out of the wood, and cry for help, if ye couldna find the road home?"

"So I did," said Kenneth, "but nobody heard me, and I could not go away and leave Clara."

"And what was to hinder the little English miss from going with you? You could surely have found your way to my cottage?"

"Don't you see," said Kenneth, "that she has sprained her ankle, and cannot walk a step?"

"Sprained her foot!" said John, melting into compassion, and looking at the little foot that was stretched out on the moss, and the pale face that leaned against the rock; "well, that was reason enough that she could not go with you, and maybe you have not been so much to blame after all. But now I must take you home as fast as I can; and I'll carry you, my bonny lamb," continued John Fraser, lifting Clara tenderly in his arms; for although John was a perfect Hercules in

strength and size, he was as compassionate as a woman.

"Don't you think, John," said Tom, "that I had better run on, and tell aunt that these children have been found? She must be in a terrible fright. They deserve to be well scolded for what they have done."

"It would be a good plan to run on to the manse, as you were saying; but take my advice, Mr Tom, dinna be scolding at thae bairns till they have got a night's rest. Keep the scolding for the morn."

"We'll see," said Tom, running off.

When John Fraser, with Clara in his arms, and the rest of his company, reached the manse, they found Mr and Mrs Melville at the gate; Mr Melville, who had just arrived from Glen Darroch, having heard of the loss of the children and their recovery at the same time. Mrs Melville looked pale, from the anxiety she had undergone, but inexpressibly thankful that the children had been recovered; while Mr Melville felt much inclined to inquire at once into the merits of the case,

and bestow a sound lecture upon the culprits who had been the cause of so much trouble and anxiety. This, however, Mrs Melville persuaded him to put off until the next day—and Clara was carried into the house. As it was necessary that something should be applied to her ankle immediately, she was taken up-stairs, still carried by John Fraser, who set her down on a chair as gently as if she had been an infant. Mr and Mrs Melville thanked him most warmly, and Mrs Melville asked him not to leave the manse until he had had some supper. John thanked her, but said he must go home to tell his wife and Mary all the particulars about the children.

“And now, my bonnie lamb,” he continued, turning to Clara, “I’ll just say good-night to you, and you’ll mind and no hide another time among the rocks.” And so saying, John left the room, and took his departure home.

Clara’s ankle was found to be very stiff, and much swollen. Two or three leeches were applied to the ankle, which greatly

relieved the pain. As the application of the leeches was rather a tedious operation, and as Clara was obliged to sit for some time with her foot in warm water, to make the wounds bleed more freely, it was long after her usual bed hour before she was ready to go to bed. Elizabeth, who went to bed at the usual time, lay with her elbow on the pillow watching all the operations, and occasionally speaking to her mamma and Clara.

Mrs Melville received from Clara a full account of all they had done that afternoon, and she pointed out the error of such thoughtlessness as Clara and Kenneth had been guilty of. Clara was so truly penitent, so patient in bearing the pain caused by her sprained ankle, and so gentle, that Mrs Melville did not say very much to her; and when she had arranged Clara for the night, and made her comfortable, she stooped down and kissed her.

"Have you forgiven me for making you so anxious, and giving you such a great deal of trouble to-night?" said Clara.

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs Melville, "and I am very glad that your papa knew nothing of all the anxiety this evening about his little girl. Now go to sleep, dear child, and do not dream of your hiding-place among the rocks." Having placed a small floating light on the toilet-table, and directed Elizabeth and Mary to come to her if Clara's foot should begin again to bleed, Mrs Melville left the room.

Next day, Mr Melville, in a few grave words, pointed out to the children the fault they had been guilty of the day before. He told them that they must never yield to impulse in that way, but always consider whether the thing they are about to do (although it may not seem actually sinful) is not likely to cause annoyance and pain to any one. "Your thoughtlessness yesterday," continued Mr Melville, "only caused a few hours of anxiety to us all; not to me, I must say, for I was not at home, but to the rest of the family; but it might have made one or other of you unhappy for life."

"How, papa?" said Kenneth.

"Why, don't you think, Kenneth, that if you had wandered along the moor, in trying to get home, and fallen into a peat-hole, and been drowned, Clara would have bitterly regretted, all her life, that ever she had consented to join you in hiding from the others? or if, in leaping from the rock, she had fallen with her head on a stone, and been killed, instead of merely spraining her ankle, would not you have been very sorry that you ever thought of playing any trick as you did?"

"Yes, indeed, papa."

Mr Melville then told them several instances in which thoughtless jests had been followed by much worse consequences than theirs, and told them he hoped they would remember the lesson they had received the preceding evening. He said he would punish neither of them, because he thought that they had been punished by themselves the night before during their stay among the rocks. He then forgave them, and told them he was very glad to find that they had not tried to excuse themselves, or to throw the blame on each other.

Clara and Kenneth had their peace to make with Tom, on whose careful management of the young people under his care they had very nearly cast so much doubt. It was not without an emphatic and rather eloquent lecture that Tom granted the forgiveness they asked, telling them, at the same time, that they would have been found much sooner the evening before, if it had not been that no one imagined that they were near the fir wood ; for he told the men how repeatedly he had shouted in the wood when he first missed them, and it was only after searching that part of the moor where the peat-holes were, that John Fraser determined to make a thorough search along the foot of the hill, and, in doing so, had discovered the lost children.

It was some days before Clara was allowed to put her foot to the ground at all, and still longer before she was allowed to walk to any distance. After she was permitted to leave the house, she rode the little Shetland pony, and thus shared in many a pleasant expedition which she would otherwise have lost.

Clara was very anxious to give John Fraser something, to shew her gratitude to him for his kind services the night she and Kenneth were lost and found. So one day, without consulting any one but Elizabeth, she bought a very magnificent snuff-box at the village shop, and such a supply of snuff, that, great as John's capabilities were in the way of taking snuff, it promised to last for some time. John's delight, when he received these proofs of Clara's gratitude, was very great—"Only to think," he said, "of the bairn's having the sense to buy snuff!"

CHAPTER XIII.

IN a short time, autumn had made undeniable progress at Inverallan. The birch-trees were plentifully sprinkled with yellow leaves, the lime-trees were far gone in decay, the planes rapidly losing colour, while the ground beneath the ash-trees and horse-chestnuts, after a high wind, was sometimes covered with leaves. The oak-trees, however, were as green as ever, and stood in sturdy vigour and summer verdure, as if resolved to brave the frost, which was now a frequent visitor. Tom Murray had left the manse, having received a summons to return home, and he left it deeply regretted by all the juveniles, with whom his good-temper and amusing qualities made him a great favourite. A letter, too,

had been received from him, and a small parcel, which arrived by the carrier, containing various tokens of remembrance, suited to the different ages of the young people at Inverallan. For these, letters of thanks were returned, containing narratives of what had been done since Tom left the manse, and earnest wishes that he were there still.

Mr Stewart, too, had returned to Inverallan, and the lessons went on as usual. It is but justice to the young people to say that they welcomed Mr Stewart with great warmth and sincerity, and resumed their regular lessons without regret. The holiday expeditions became, of course, few and far between, for there had been one or two wet Saturdays. Some of the harvest had been carried into the stackyard, and the fields looked bare, except where turnips grew; but in many places the oats and barley were in sheaves on the ground, and beyond Glen Darroch there were some fields that had not yet been touched. Beside the cottages there was an abundant supply of peats for the winter's fuel; and

close to some of them might be seen large roots of the bog pine—the remains of Scotland's ancient forests—dug up from the mosses, the resinous splinters of which were used, in many of the cottages, to give light, instead of lamps or candles. The gooseberries had long disappeared from the manse garden ; scarcely one sour frost-bitten raspberry was to be found ; but apples and pears were plentiful, and there were also some plums. Many of the summer flowers had disappeared ; but those belonging to autumn were in bloom. The hollyhocks looked bright and gay against the garden wall ; the dahlias were in full bloom. A bed of beautiful carnations, with the sweet-peas, mignonette, and verbenas, that were still blossoming, not only made the garden lovely, but helped to fill the flower-glasses. To these we may add fuschias, Chinese roses, China asters, and autumn annuals, so that when any one walked in the manse garden in a sunny forenoon, it was difficult to believe that summer had quite departed.

The evenings and mornings, however,

were cold, and a fire was not only pleasant, but necessary. The sky at night looked clear and lofty, and the stars shone much more brightly than in the soft warm nights of summer.

During the summer and autumn, Clara heard weekly from her papa, and sometimes more frequently. Once, too, there arrived a large box, with Clara's address on it; and when it was opened, it was found to contain, along with sundry smaller articles, two desks—beautiful little desks, lined with purple velvet—for Mary and Elizabeth; a work-box for Clara herself, in consideration of her great improvement in needlework; and a plum-cake from nurse, in return for the cap which Clara had made and sent her.

What a plum-cake that was! It was the work of nurse's own hands, and was covered with sugar as white as snow, and nearly an inch thick. There were little figures on it, too, some of which had suffered sad dilapidation on the journey north. One of them, however, a sailor, with a union jack in his hand, was in

great preservation, and was forthwith removed from the cake, and set upon the nursery chimneypiece, beside an opera dancer who had only lost one arm. The inside of the cake was as good as the outside was beautiful ; every one in the house had some of it, and every one praised it. A portion of it was taken to Mary Fraser ; but Mary tasted it only to please her young friends, she could not take more than one mouthful.

While the warm summer weather continued, Mary's health had varied very little. She was always confined to her sofa-bed, but she was able to see her young friends, to take pleasure in their visits, and talk to them. But when the chill mornings and evenings of autumn succeeded the comparatively warm days of summer, Mary began to fade rapidly ; an exhausting cough, and frequent fits of breathlessness, wore away her strength. She knew that she was dying ; she knew that no spring on earth would ever bloom for her ; that when another spring came, with its glorious sunshine and sweet

sounds, her lips would be closed for ever in this earth ; but she knew also that the change would be to her a change from pain, and weakness, and disease, to unfading happiness and strength in heaven, for she was going to a land where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

The children at the manse could not persuade themselves that Mary Fraser was dying. They had known her ill so long, that it seemed to them now, that if she could get rid of her cough, she might be restored to that degree of strength at least which she had had during the summer. Childhood cannot understand the approach of death, neither can mature years fully realize the meaning of the tidings when that sad message comes that a beloved one is about to leave us.

Mrs Fraser would not believe that Mary was so very ill. She did everything in her power to relieve her child, watched her at night, and tended her by day ; but still she kept on hoping that she would

get better ; and when foreboding thoughts, in spite of herself, would break into her mind, she tried to destroy them by speaking hopefully to Mary of some new remedy, and of all that they would do when spring came again, and when the long winter, that had not then set in, had passed away.

" Oh, mother dear ! " said Mary, one day, when her mother had been talking in that manner, " don't say that. I don't wish to stay here. Look at me, mother, wasted and worn ; think of all the pain I feel, and then think how different it will be with me soon. "

" Darling Mary, " said her mother, " oh, don't talk of going ! What will I do without you, the only bairn I have ? and if I had a dozen, it would be all the same. Mary, think of your poor mother—would you wish to leave me ? "

" Mother, if I were well and strong, maybe I would not be thinking as I do now ; and don't think it is because I do not love you, mother, that I would like to be away, for I like you better than ever ; but oh ! mother, I love Jesus Christ more.

Don't cry—oh! don't cry," continued Mary, as her mother sat down, and covering her face with her apron, sobbed aloud; "it breaks my heart to hear you do that. Pray to God, mother; He will make you willing to part with me. You won't have very long to stay here, and oh! mother, there will be no parting in heaven!"

"Mary," said her mother, drying her tears, "if it's God's will to take you away, I'll no murmur; but oh! it's sore to part with you."

"It's only for a little while, mother, and no for ever—that would be terrible. Jesus Christ will comfort you, mother; only pray to Him. There's my little Bible, mother; you'll promise to read it?"

"Ay will I, Mary; I'll never forget to read it."

From that day, Mrs Fraser began to lose hope with regard to Mary's recovery, although she could not quite realize that she was soon to die. The children frequently walked to the cottage to inquire for Mary; and they were generally admitted to see

her, although sometimes she could not speak a single word to them. Mr and Mrs Melville also were frequent visitors.

One evening towards the end of September, about half-past six o'clock, the children came in from the garden and shrubbery, where they had been sweeping the walks, and gathering the withered leaves into heaps. The air was sharp and keen, and in spite of the exercise which they had had out of doors, their fingers were cold, and they enjoyed the prospect of a warm fire and the cheerful tea-hour. But when they entered the dining-room, they found that neither their 'papa nor mamma was there.

The tea-tray was on the table, and a small but warm bright fire was blazing. The sofa was drawn round near the fire, so that the room had quite a comfortable appearance. The girls sat down on the sofa, waiting until Mrs Melville should come home; while Frank took a book and read, between times looking up, to express rather an impatient wish for tea. Kenneth and James had gone up-stairs.

"How dark it is getting!" said Clara;

"why, we must have candles at tea to-night."

"Yes," said Mary; "I really wish mamma would come home; it is quite late."

"It is only seven o'clock," said Clara; "there is the hour striking. How early we used to think this time in summer! The sun used to be shining, and everything as bright as in the middle of the day."

"Let us have candles now, Mary," said Elizabeth; "we cannot see to do anything, and there is mamma coming. If you will ring the bell, Clara and I will draw the curtains and shut the shutters."

The dining-room door was opened, and Mrs Melville entered with her two little boys.

"Dear mamma, how late you are, and how cold your hands are!" said Mary; "do come near the fire."

"Thank you, Mary; but I must go up-stairs to take off my shawl and bonnet."

"Let me take them for you, mamma, and that will save you the trouble of going up-stairs."

"No, thank you, my dear, but you may come up-stairs with me."

"Where is papa?" said Elizabeth.

"He is coming presently," said Mrs Melville. "I am afraid we are very late; you must have some tea directly; you can ring the bell for the hot water, Elizabeth. Here are my keys, Clara and you may make the tea. You know how much to put into the tea-pot?"

"Yes, mamma," said Elizabeth; "and Clara knows too."

"I wonder if anything is the matter?" said Elizabeth. "Mamma looked very grave, I thought; she did not smile as she always does."

"Perhaps Mary Fraser is worse," said Clara; "we forgot to ask."

"Oh! I hope not," said Elizabeth.

Mrs Melville and Mary soon returned to the dining-room, and they all had tea. Before they had finished, Mr Melville came in, and he, too, like Mrs Melville, looked very grave. He did not remain long at the tea-table; and as soon as the tea-things were removed, and the servant had left the

room, the children took their seats round the table as usual. One of the first questions asked was regarding Mary Fraser.

"My dear children," said Mrs Melville, "Mary has gone where there is no more pain and sorrow; she died this afternoon. I did not tell you when I first came home this evening; I waited until your papa should return."

There was a general burst of grief among the children, for Mary had been a great favourite with them.

"Oh! mamma," said Kenneth, sobbing, "shall we never see Mary any more?"

"Yes, dear boy; if you love God, and seek to please Him as Mary Fraser did, you will see her again in that happy place that Jesus has gone to prepare for His children."

"How very sorry John Fraser and his wife must be!" said Mary, "for they were so fond of Mary, and she was their only child."

"Yes, they are in great grief," said her papa; "and they are not perhaps able to

think just now of the many things that they have to comfort them."

"What things, papa?" said Elizabeth.

"Why, do you think that it is no comfort to be able to think that their child is not lost, but gone before to heaven, where, if they, too, love God, they shall one day see her?"

"Yes, papa; that must be a great comfort."

"How happy Mary is now!" said Mr Melville. "This morning, even this afternoon, she was lying in great pain; for a long time her poor wearied body has never been free from pain; but what a difference the last few hours have made!—for there is no sickness or disease where Mary has gone. And now, dear children, I wish you to think of this, for there is nothing we are more apt to forget than death. You are all young, and have never yet seen death; for God has mercifully preserved us here; but the day is coming when one and another of us shall be taken away; and we know not who shall first be taken. God does not always take the old and middle-

aged ; He often takes the young ; and as none of you are too young to die, so none of you are too young to prepare for death."

" Was Mary afraid to die ?" said Clara.
" Did she know she was dying ?"

" Yes," said Mr Melville, " she knew that she was dying ; and she was not afraid to die. Now there is only one thing that can make us happy when we are going to die—we must belong to God, we must have our hearts changed by the Holy Spirit, we must love Jesus Christ, if we wish to die in peace. God has told us the conditions on which He permits people to enter heaven, and on no other conditions will He permit them to enter but on those He tells us in the Bible. We must belong to Christ, or we cannot enter heaven. St John says : ' He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Now, the reason that we speak so confidently about Mary Fraser, and feel so sure that she is in heaven, is because she believed what God said in the Bible.

She asked the Lord Jesus to be her Saviour. And you know what the blessed Redeemer Himself says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' If you seek the Lord Jesus, dear children, He will hear you, just as He did Mary Fraser; and when you come to die, you will have no fear; for how can those be afraid who feel that they are going home? If you put off seeking Jesus now, death may come while you are unprepared, and how terrible that would be! When you are older, and perhaps leave this home, and mix among many people, you will meet some, nay, many, who do not know, and who do not feel, the importance of seeking Christ. You will see many who, for want of reading the Bible, and praying for help to understand it, have quite wrong ideas about the way in which sinners can enter heaven. Never listen to the foolish ideas of many men on this subject. Keep fast to the Bible, which is God's book, and is true; and remember what our Saviour Himself says, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto

the Father but by me.' And again, in another place, 'I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.' There is no possibility of entering heaven by any other way than by Jesus Christ. When St John saw a vision of the redeemed in heaven, he was told, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God.' There are many reasons why people should seek God in early youth. Youth is the best time to seek God, because then the heart is softer, and more easily impressed, and not so much taken up with worldly things as it is afterwards. We ought to seek God in youth, for the best and freshest of our days should be given to the service of Him who sent His Son to die for us. But by far the most startling reason to urge us to seek God without delay is, that, if we do not seek Him immediately, we may never have an opportunity of seeking Him at all, but may die in our sins. You cannot think

how happy your mother and I would be if we thought that you all, dear children, were seeking God. Wherever you went, we should have no fear for you if you were God's children."

Mr Melville ceased speaking, and the children also were silent; but their faces shewed that they were deeply impressed. The little boys went to bed. Their mamma went up-stairs with them to the nursery, heard them say their prayers and hymns, and saw them laid in their little beds.

Mr Melville told the others, that when he came in to tea, he had just left John Fraser's cottage, and he answered many of the questions which they put to him concerning Mary Fraser. At prayers that evening, Mr Melville, as his custom was when any event that might be improved for the good of any occurred, spoke of the happy death of Mary Fraser, and urged on his hearers the necessity of immediately caring for their souls. He also prayed most earnestly that none might be suffered to live and die ignorant of Christ Jesus, but that all might that night seek Him.

It was with sorrowful hearts that the girls went to their rooms that night ; and more than one resolution was formed to seek God, and more than one prayer offered up by young hearts that the Saviour who had been with Mary Fraser in the hour of death might be their Saviour also.

“ Weeping,” says the Psalmist, “ may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning ;” and if this is true even in mature years, with regard to those lesser anxieties and griefs which do not permanently cloud the spirit, it is true of almost all grief in the days of childhood. The grief must indeed be great, and heavy, that to a child can cast a gloom over the sunshine of a bright morning, or wake to weeping the eyes that closed in tears the night before. And so at Inverallan, the morning after Mary Fraser’s death, the voices of the children were ringing through the house as usual, and their eyes were as bright as if they had never wept. But it is not to be supposed that the event of the day before, and Mr Melville’s remarks on it, had made

no impression, for some of the prayers of that morning, and of many mornings and evenings, contained earnest petitions to be admitted into heaven by that only door of entrance, the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

"KENNETH," said Clara a few days after this, as they stood within the manse gate, "what is that woman carrying in her arms? She looks very tired, and scarcely able to walk. Let us ask her to sit down and rest a little."

"I shall speak to her," said Kenneth; "what shall I call her?"

The children opened the gate, and going up to the woman, Kenneth said gently, "Woman, are you tired? what is that you have in your arms?"

The woman stopped and looked at the young questioner, and said, "Yes, sir, I am tired. I have gone many a weary mile this day; and what have I got in my arms? Look here;" and unfolding the

shawl, she shewed them a baby, not plump and rosy, like the village babies, but thin and pale.

The children looked at it with compassion in their eyes. The woman's whole face and manner softened as she looked at them, and sitting down on the bank at the side of the road, she laid the baby on her lap, and made the two children that were at her side sit down beside her. They were little girls of five and six years old.

"Would you like to have some bread and milk," said Kenneth, "for I will go and get some for you?"

"You are the first person, little sir, that ever asked me that question. Many a time I have asked a bit, and been refused; but if you like to bring me some, I'll be much obliged, for the bairns are hungry. No that I have been always refused," she continued, addressing Clara, "for at many a poor door I have got a handful from the meal chest; and maybe at the great houses, if I had seen the leddy, I would have got help, but servants will no take much trouble."

While Clara was standing beside the poor woman, Kenneth went to the back door that led to the kitchen, and shouted, "Margaret!"

Margaret made her appearance from the kitchen, where she was baking.

"Margaret," said Kenneth, "I wish to have some bread and milk for a poor woman that is sitting outside the gate."

"You had better get some, then," said Margaret, rather grimly.

"But how can I get any, Margaret, unless you give me some, for you have all the bread and milk?"

"And none of it shall you get this day for any beggar sitting outside the gate; so go away, Master Kenneth, and leave me to my baking. The sorrow's in the bairn; there's a cake burning at the fire!" continued Margaret, as a strong smell of burning proceeded from the kitchen.

"Now, Margaret," continued Kenneth, who followed her into the kitchen, "you will give me something for that poor woman. She has a baby in her arms, such a poor thin baby; I think it must be dying; and

she says she has walked many a weary mile this day. Do give me some bread and milk."

Margaret's heart began to soften a little, and she went to a closet which opened off the kitchen, and took out part of a hard dried slice of bread, and pouring a little milk from a large dish that stood on the table into a small basin, she gave them to Kenneth.

He looked at them for a moment, and then he said, "Margaret, there is not enough here; I must have some more; mamma is not at home, or I would go and ask her. I tell you what, Margaret," he continued, seeing that she looked inexorable, "if you will give me as much sweet milk as I get at tea every night, I won't take any to-night, and that will make up for it."

"No, no," said Margaret, "why should you want to give to beggars? go away with what you have got."

"You are a cruel wicked woman," said Kenneth; "how would you like to be treated in that way, if you were walking through the country begging, with a thin pale baby

in your arms, and two children beside you?"

"A cruel wicked woman!" said Margaret; "no more cruel and wicked than yourself, Master Kenneth; so go away out of my kitchen. A pretty thing it would be if all the beggars in the country-side were to get good sweet milk to drink. I wonder what sort of house you will have when you have one."

"I won't have you for a housekeeper, any way," said Kenneth.

"You will be much the better of having me," said Margaret, as she lifted a basin and went to a pantry outside the kitchen door, in the passage that led to the house, to fetch some more oatmeal.

She had no sooner left the kitchen than Kenneth filled the basin which Margaret had before given him with milk from the larger basin that stood on the table, and snatching up two oatmeal bannocks, he made his way as fast as he could to the gate, leaving traces of his hasty flight on the steps that led from the kitchen-door to the yard.

When Margaret returned to the kitchen she saw that her oat-cakes were not as she had left them. She noticed their diminished number, and this led her to look elsewhere.

"As I am a living woman," she said, "if that mischievous boy has not run off with some milk and two of my cakes! but I'll have his mamma told this very day."

"What is the matter?" said Jessie, who had come down-stairs.

"Matter," said Margaret, "it's enough to aggravate anybody. There's Master Kenneth run off with ever so much sweet milk to a beggar at the gate."

"A beggar at the gate!" said Jessie; "I must go after him." And Jessie set off as fast as she could to the gate, where she saw Kenneth and Clara standing beside the poor woman, who was breaking some of the oat-cake, and dipping it into the milk to soften it for the baby, while the two children sat on the ground each with a large portion of oat-cake in her hand.

"Miss Clara, and Master Kenneth," said Jessie, "you must come into the house

directly. It is not a proper thing for you to be standing out here consorting with beggars that come from nobody knows where. It will be a good thing if you have not caught small-pox or fever, or some of the things that are always going about the towns ; so come along directly."

"Just wait a minute, Jessie," said Clara, "till the woman has finished, and then we will go."

The woman made the baby drink a little of the milk, and then gave some to each of the other children, reserving a very small quantity for herself. She then rose, thanked the children, gave the basin to Jessie, and proceeded to move onwards.

The children returned within the gate, and went to the garden, where Jessie left them, informing them that Margaret would certainly tell Mrs Melville about Master Kenneth's conduct.

"What did you do, Kenneth?" said Clara.

"He stole some milk and oat-cakes for the poor woman," said Jessie.

"Not stole," said Kenneth ; "at least I

did not steal the milk; for I am going to do without milk at tea; and mamma would have let me have something, but Margaret is so cross."

"But you could not expect Margaret to give you bread and milk without being told by your mamma," said Jessie; "for the bread and milk are not hers, and servants should not give away what belongs to their master and mistress without leave."

"Oh, mamma would not have been a bit angry with her," said Kenneth; "would she, Clara?"

"No," said Clara, "I am sure she would not."

At tea that evening Mr Melville began to tell Mrs Melville about a poor woman whom he had met near Mrs Forbes's in Glen Darroch.

"That must be our beggar woman, Clara," said Kenneth, who was sitting next her. "What was she like, papa?" he continued aloud. "Had she a baby in her arms, and two little girls at her side, with very few clothes on them? and

was she very tired, and scarcely able to walk?"

"Yes," said his papa, "she had all the children you mention, and she was very tired. Did you see her to-day?"

"Yes, papa, she passed the gate when Clara and I were near it."

"Kenneth," said his mamma, "you have no milk, my dear; hand me your cup, and I shall give you some."

"No, thank you, mamma," said Kenneth, "I don't wish to have any."

"Why, what is the matter, Kenneth? does your head ache?"

"No, mamma, but the beggar woman, you know; did Margaret not tell you?"

"No, Kenneth, you must tell me yourself; what has the beggar woman to do with your refusing milk?"

Kenneth reddened, and hesitated a little, and then said, "Mamma, when Clara and I were standing inside the gate to-day, we saw a beggar woman passing, the very woman papa saw in Glen Darroch; she looked very tired, and when we went up to her, and spoke to her, we saw that she

had a baby in her arms, so thin and ill. We asked her if she would like to have some bread and milk, and she said she would; so Clara stayed beside her, and I went to the kitchen door to ask Margaret for some bread and milk. Margaret was baking," continued Kenneth, "and she's awful cross sometimes when she is busy; so what do you think she did? First, she would not give anything at all, and then she gave me a bit of hard dry bread, a month old, and a drop of milk not enough for a baby."

"And what did you do, Kenneth?" said his mamma.

"I said if she would give me more milk, that I would do without any at tea; but," continued Kenneth, indignantly, "she would not even let me do that; so, when she went away for more oatmeal, I took two oat-cakes and a good deal of milk, and carried them to the woman; and she was so glad, and gave the baby and the little girls some, but she did not take much for herself. And that is the reason I do not wish to have any milk."

"You shall have the half of mine," said Clara; "I did not remember about the poor woman, or I would have given it to you before."

"Take some of mine, Kenneth," said James.

"And mine," said some one else.

"No, no," said Mr Melville; "that must not be; Kenneth offered to go without milk this evening, and intended to go without it when he took the milk away, and he must keep to his intention."

"But you are not angry with him?" said Clara, looking up at Mr Melville.

"No, not angry; but still I think that Kenneth did wrong in taking the milk and oat-cakes without leave, as he did."

"Papa, I did it for good," said Kenneth, "and I thought it would not be wrong if I paid the milk with my own at night; and I knew that mamma and you were always kind to beggars."

"Still, Kenneth, we must not do evil that good may come. No consideration whatever should make us forsake the straight path; and although we may feel

strongly tempted to do so sometimes, and may sometimes also fancy that our motives are good and kind, we must remember, that if we take a wrong way to do even a right thing, we commit sin. It is right to help the poor, but not right to take things for that purpose that do not belong to yourself. So remember, my dear boy, that you must not again take anything without leave."

"What could I have done, papa? the woman and the children were very hungry!"

"You could have asked the woman to wait for a short time," said his papa; "you knew that your mamma would not be long absent. It very rarely happens that there is no one at home to whom you can apply."

"I will remember that next time, papa."

"And I shall tell Margaret, Kenneth," said his mamma, "that if at any time you wish to dispose of your own portion of milk, she is to let you have it."

"Thank you, dear mamma!"

On the following Saturday, the children had a very pleasant drive to Glen Darroch. Frank was the charioteer, and drove very

well, and all the children managed to get into the dog-cart, except Kenneth, who rode Donald. On their way home from the Glen, Clara said, "I wonder if anything is wrong with papa; I have not had a letter from him this week, and he always writes very regularly."

"Perhaps he may have been busy, Clara," said Mrs Melville, "and may intend to write next week. I don't think that you need suppose that there is anything wrong."

"Perhaps you may have a letter by to-day's post," said Elizabeth; "I should not wonder if you had. I have a sort of impression on my mind that there will be something."

"Mind what you are about, Elizabeth," said Mary; "you will fall off the back of the dog-cart if you move about so."

"There is not a bit of danger, Mary."

"Here we are at last," said Frank, jumping down from his seat, and helping his mother to alight, immediately after reaching the manse door.

"Mamma," said James, who had reached

the hall door first, "there is a portmanteau here under the table, and a very large carpet bag, and a hat that is not papa's upon the table, and a greatcoat, and"——

"Hush," said his mother, "do not shout in that manner; some visitor must have arrived in our absence."

"Who can it be?" said Mary.

"Some one that must intend to stay for some time," said Clara; "there must be a quantity of things in that carpet-bag."

"Mamma has gone into the dining-room, we shall hear who it is," said Mary, "when she goes up-stairs to take off her bonnet."

"Look here, Clara," said Elizabeth; "come to the door and look at Kenneth; he has tied up Donald's bridle, and the pony is walking after him."

"Where is he going?" said Clara.

"He is going round to the stable," said Elizabeth; "I wonder if Donald would follow me?"

"Oh! who is that holding my eyes?" said Clara, as she suddenly found herself in darkness.

"Guess," said a voice behind her.

"Papa!" she almost shrieked—"papa, is it you?" The hands were withdrawn from her eyes, and Clara found herself clasped in her father's arms.

"Dear papa! dear, dear papa!" she said, "when did you come? how long are you going to stay? why did you come without letting me know?"

"I came by the railway great part of the way; the latter part of my journey was performed in a hired carriage; and I could not let you know of my coming, because I only decided upon coming yesterday morning."

"But I am so glad you have come, you dear, good papa!" said Clara.

"Now you must release me, Clara," said Mr Stanley, "I have a number of acquaintances to make here. I must be introduced to all these young ladies and gentlemen, whose names I know already in general, although I should probably misplace them if I were to endeavour to apply them individually."

After Mr Stanley had talked to the

children for a few minutes, Mrs Melville said that some of them had better go up-stairs. "You need not go, Clara," continued Mrs Melville, "you had better stay with your papa; I did not mean that you were to go."

"I am going up-stairs to put away my bonnet," said Clara, "and then I shall come down to papa."

"Clara," said Elizabeth, when they had gone up-stairs, "your papa is very different from what I thought he was."

"What did you think he was like?"

"I thought he was much older. You know you sometimes said that he was a dear old papa."

"I suppose Elizabeth thought that he was an old man with grey hair," said Mary.

"No, I did not," said Elizabeth, "but I thought that Clara's papa was older than ours; now he is a good deal younger."

"Do you think you will like him?" said Clara.

"Yes, I think so," said Elizabeth; "I think he is a very nice papa, and so is ours."

We must shew him all the places round about this."

"Yes," said Clara, "and take him to Glen Darroch, and to Mrs Fraser's. I hope he is going to stay for some time, for there is a good deal to do. Now I must go down-stairs, for I have a great many questions to ask him. Won't you come too?" she continued, addressing Mary and Elizabeth.

"Not just now," said Mary; and Clara tripped down-stairs by herself.

"Well, Mary," said Elizabeth, after Clara had gone, "Mr Stanley does seem a very nice person; but I am half sorry he has come. I am afraid he will wish to take Clara away with him, and I should be so sorry if Clara were to leave us."

"So should I," said Mary; "but we must ask mamma and papa to persuade Mr Stanley to let Clara stay. If she does not stay here, her papa would be obliged to send her to school. I heard mamma say that to papa the other day; and I am sure, if Clara is obliged to leave

her papa at all, she would rather stay here than go to school."

"I should think so," said Elizabeth.

Meanwhile Clara was seated by her papa, giving him an account of her various studies and employments, her amusements and acquaintances, adding, at the same time, a brief sketch of the characters of these last. Besides bestowing a great deal of information, she asked innumerable questions. Finally, she accompanied her papa up-stairs, assisted him to unpack, poked his fire for him, and then left him to get ready for dinner.

Before dinner had passed, Mr Stanley stood high in the good graces of all the young people, and seemed to be looked upon as an old and tried friend. The circumstance that he was Clara's papa might partly account for this, his own highly popular qualities did the rest.

In the evening, after tea, Mr Stanley brought down-stairs some of the articles that had helped to fill the portmanteau and weighty carpet-bag. Kenneth and James were made very happy by receiving,

as gifts from Mr Stanley, an interesting book full of woodcuts, and an amusing and instructive game. They were to be joint proprietors of the book and game, an arrangement which suited them exactly. Frank, Mary, Elizabeth, and Clara, received books suited to their respective ages and dispositions.

"What is that you have in the large parcel, papa?" said Clara.

"What do you think, my inquisitive little girl?" said Mr Stanley.

"Let me see," said Clara, feeling the parcel. "There are several things here. It must be more books."

"Did you not write to me some time ago that you would like to give something to those good charitable people that spent their time, after they were tired with the day's work, in looking for two good-for-nothing youngsters, who frightened all their friends by hiding in a wood?"

"Yes, papa, and what have you got there?"

"You may untie the parcel and look."

Clara untied the string, and, opening

the parcel, beheld several handsome volumes,

"Bibles!" she exclaimed; "how beautiful they are! This largest Bible is for John Fraser, I suppose; I wish you would write his name in it, papa."

"I shall write the names on all the Bibles," said Mr Stanley; "your own writing is not yet sufficiently steady."

"Thank you, papa," said Clara; "but I am most particular about John Fraser's, for John is a very nice man indeed, papa. I like him very much. He had one little girl, and now she is dead, and I am very sorry for him."

"And so am I, Clara; we shall go some day and visit John Fraser."

The conversation was almost entirely between Clara and her papa, for the rest of the young people were deep in the contemplation of their books, and Mrs Melville was not in the room. She, however, soon returned, accompanied by Mr Melville, who had been engaged in talking to one of his elders, who had called to see him on business. The conversation was then car-

ried on between Mr Stanley and Mr and Mrs Melville, with the children for listeners; for there were things spoken of that interested them, and withdrew their attention from their books.

Very soon, however, Mr Melville had prayers, and immediately after, all the children except Frank went to bed.

CHAPTER XV.

NEXT day, after returning from church, Mr Stanley went up to his own room to read, and after Clara had said some of her Scripture lessons, she followed him there. He was sitting in an arm-chair, by the fire, with a little table beside him, on which lay the Bible, and some other books. Clara took a stool from the other side of the fire, and having placed it at her father's feet, sat down, and clasping her hands together over his knees, sat and looked at him for a little without speaking. At last she said, suddenly breaking the silence, "When are you going away, papa?"

"I am not quite sure yet; perhaps not for a week or ten days. But what of that?"

"Are you going to take me away with you?"

"I am not quite sure of that neither," said Mr Stanley; "are you tired of staying here?"

"No, papa," said Clara; "I like Inver-allan very much; and if you were here too, I think I should like better to stay here than at Ashgrove."

"Well, I'll tell you what, Clara, I am going to treat you like a grown woman, and ask your advice upon a subject that perplexes me very much."

"And will you take my advice, papa?" said Clara.

"I cannot exactly promise; I shall see first what sort of advice it is."

"I must have this chair opposite you, papa," said Clara.

"No, no, sit where you are, and listen to me," said Mr Stanley. "And now for the matter on which I must have your advice. I have one little girl, you must know, about whose education I am very anxious. She is an only child, and has no companions at home. It will be a

matter of great difficulty for me to procure a suitable person to educate her at home with me. I cannot send her to the very excellent school that there is in the village near Ashgrove, for she is getting old, and her studies would frequently be interrupted by the weather ; and as she would have to prepare her lessons at home, and spend many hours there, when perhaps I could not attend to her, I should feel afraid that she might fall into idle habits. Some one may perhaps say that I might send her to school at some distance from home, but I do not wish to do so at present ; so what must I do ?”

“ I do not know,” said Clara ; “ is that all you have to tell me ?”

“ No, I have a little more,” said Mr Stanley. “ This little girl of mine is at present staying with some kind friends, who have a large family. She is very happy ; these friends pay every possible attention to her education ; they do for her a great deal more than I could do in that way ; and I feel sure that they will never allow anything wrong to pass unproved,

nor neglect to teach her anything that is good. She has improved very much during the months she has been under their care; and, what is wonderful to relate, they have not grown tired of her, but are willing—nay, anxious—to have my troublesome little daughter for some time longer. They say that she is improving so much that it would be a pity to interrupt her studies, and that, after all, the climate in the north is not so very cold. So what do you advise me to do, Clara?"

Something like a smile played for an instant round Clara's mouth, but it was succeeded by a very mournful expression, and the tears, that had been gathering for some time, now poured forth like summer rain.

"Why, Clara," said her papa, as some of the large tear-drops glistened on his coat, "this is not the way to give me advice. You know you are to be a woman, and think of what I have said."

"I am thinking, papa," said Clara, "and that is the reason I cannot help crying, for do you know what I am going to

say ? I think you should let me stay here ; it will be better than going to school, and better than having anybody to teach me at home, for, perhaps, I might not get leave to see you much, and that would be terrible."

" Well, I think you have given me good advice, little woman ; and I am glad to see that you have got so much firmness of mind, as to prefer duty to inclination. It is not always very easy to do so."

" No indeed, papa," said Clara, weeping ; " will you write very often, and oh ! will you promise one thing, papa ? Will you let me finish my lessons at sixteen, and keep the house for you then ? I am learning a great deal about keeping a house ; I know the price of a great many things."

" I shall promise to write to you very often, Clara ; but I cannot promise to allow you to leave off lessons at sixteen, and begin housekeeping for me. Your ideas on many subjects will change, should you live so long, and, probably, you may yourself wish to continue at lessons."

Clara looked a little incredulous. "Shall I not be very old when I am sixteen?"

"Not very," said Mr Stanley, rising from his chair, and opening his dressing-case, from which he took a small morocco case. "Look here, Clara," he continued, as he returned to his seat; "this is a small gift for you. I did not mean to give it to you immediately, had I taken you home with me, but since you are to remain, you will like to have it now. Open the case," continued Mr Stanley, as Clara sat with it in her hand, gazing on it.

"I am wondering what it can be, papa," she said, undoing the clasp. The lid of the case flew open, and displayed a very beautiful daguerreotype likeness of Mr Stanley.

Clara uttered a short cry of surprise and joy.

"And is this really to be my own, papa—this beautiful picture of you? Oh, thank you, thank you, dear, good papa; I will keep it so carefully in my desk, and look at it every morning when I get up,

and every night when I go to bed, and a great many times during the day. If you had asked what I would like best, I should never have thought of this; it is far better than I could ever have thought of."

"I am very glad you are pleased, Clara," said her papa.

"Papa," said Clara, after a long examination of the likeness, "how long are you likely to stay here?"

"Since I am not to take you home with me, perhaps I may manage to stay a fortnight here."

"A fortnight," said Clara, "that is pretty long; we shall have time for some long walks."

"And some long conversations, too, Clara; but now we shall not talk about going home any longer; we shall read together for a little while."

Clara drew a chair in beside her papa, and they read together for some time. Their book was the Bible, and after reading, Mr Stanley talked with his little girl concerning what they had read, explaining

what she did not understand, and exchanging remarks with her concerning it.

After conversing for some time, Clara exclaimed, "Look, papa, do you see those people?"

"Where?" said Mr Stanley, rising and approaching the window, whither Clara had already gone.

"These people going down the road? These are the people that wait for the Gaelic sermon, some of them at least; so Mr Melville must have come home, and we shall have dinner in a very short time. Are you hungry, papa?"

"Not very," said Mr Stanley.

"But I am very hungry," said Clara.

During the week, Clara accompanied her father to John Fraser's cottage. John was at home, and received with much pleasure the beautiful Bible which Mr Stanley had brought from Edinburgh for him. Mr Stanley thanked John for his kindness to his little girl on that night when she and Frank remained behind the others in the fir wood.

"It's no worth the speaking of," said John. "I'm thinking ye'll no try that trick again," he continued, turning to Clara.

"Clara has learned a little wisdom from experience," said Mr Stanley.

"It's dear-bought wisdom, sometimes, sir," said John, and we dinna forget it in a hurry.

"Is your wife not at home, to-day?" said Mr Stanley.

"No, sir; she's gone to see a neighbour about a mile off; she'll be vexed when she hears that you have been here, and she away."

"Clara has got a little book for her, but we shall leave it with you, and you must tell your wife that I am sorry I have not seen her."

"And she will be sorry too, sir," said John, "and much obliged to Miss Clara for the book. It has a real bonny outside," continued he, looking at the gilt morocco, "and I am not fit to touch it, Miss Clara, with hands as hard as iron,

but just put it down at the window, on the top of that apron, and she'll put it bye when she comes home in a soft place, and take it out and read it on the Sabbath-days."

"You will find that it has a good inside as well as a beautiful outside," said Mr Stanley, smiling.

From John Fraser's, Clara went with her father to one or two other cottages, where the other volumes were bestowed on the inmates who had kindly assisted to find Kenneth and Clara.

"Clara," said Elizabeth, one morning, "did you hear the wind howling in the chimney last night, and all round the house?"

"Yes," said Clara.

"And what did I tell you?"

"That there would be snow. Is there any?"

"Yes, and the sky is cloudy, quite grey."

"How sorry I am!" said Clara, "for poor papa must go away to-morrow morning. He says he must go, he has something

of importance to do at home; that is just what he said," continued Clara.

"He cannot go if there is a snow-storm," said Elizabeth. "I hope, for your sake, Clara, that he may be snowed up here for a fortnight."

"There is not the smallest chance of that," said Mary, from the inner apartment—her own dormitory. "No one is ever snowed up here for a fortnight, even during the long snow-storms, and this is too early for the snow to lie long. I daresay it will thaw some time or another to-day, and your papa will be able to get away by the coach to-morrow."

"How cruel and hard-hearted Mary is, to be prophesying thaw in that way!" said Elizabeth. "Would not you rather have a dreadful snow-storm, Clara, and hard frost afterwards, so that no coach could go along the road?"

"Well, I wish papa could stay a little longer," said Clara.

"But there must be a last day to every visit," said Mary, "and you must just comfort yourself to-day with the thought that

your papa will soon come here again. And I am sure we are very glad that you are not going away with him. We shall have such amusement this winter, if there is any snow. Mr Ross, one of papa's friends, gave Frank a sledge last winter, quite a common wooden thing, but as good as if it were ever so grand, and Donald goes beautifully in it. You shall have some drives, and I am sure you will like it better than a carriage."

When the children went down to breakfast, Mr Melville asked Clara if she thought she had got to the Arctic regions.

"We have been telling Clara about the sledge, papa," said Elizabeth. "Do you think we might give her a drive to-day?"

"The snow is too soft, Elizabeth," said her papa, "and not sufficiently deep; the thaw has already begun, and the thermometer is rising rapidly."

"Then we must wait some time, Clara," said Elizabeth, "until a winter snow-storm comes, and you shall have a drive."

That evening Clara was much too busy to feel many sorrowful anticipations. She

assisted her papa to pack; indeed, he delivered over his portmanteau entirely to her, only imploring her not to put his boots on the top of the other articles.

"Papa," said Clara, somewhat indignantly, "I know much better than that. I am going to put your boots into the carpet-bag."

There were one or two gentlemen at dinner that day; and before they left the manse in the evening, Clara went up-stairs to finish everything she had to do, that she might have a short time to talk to her papa before going to bed. After completing the packing of the portmanteau, and picking up all the torn, crumpled bits of paper and packing-cord that were scattered on the floor, Clara proceeded to the nursery to make up a small parcel for nurse, containing a needlecase and pincushion of her own making, and some other small articles. This, with the help of Mary and Elizabeth, was accomplished, though not without difficulty. For some time the paper would not allow itself to be folded properly; but at last it took the form of a parcel, which,

although not exactly of the oblong figure which a proper parcel should be, satisfied Clara and her assistants. It had then to be sealed, and this, too, was managed. True, there were one or two burnt fingers, and a violent smell of scorching was discovered to proceed from Elizabeth, whose head at one time approached the candle too closely. After nurse's parcel was fastened and laid on Mr Stanley's table, a grand council was held in the nursery as to the propriety of giving Mr Stanley something for his journey. By a majority of votes, it was decided that from the small stores of the conclave a portion should be put up for Mr Stanley, and that, instead of being given to him, it should be put into his coat-pocket, to occasion a pleasant surprise on his journey. Clara had that very day received a paper-bag containing various kinds of sugar-plums, burnt almonds, &c. These articles she had divided among her companions. As each one wished to give something to Mr Stanley, and as no one was contented to have his or her gift joined to that of another,

five little hard-cornered parcels were made, the pages of an old copy-book supplying the paper necessary, and a little red German wool taking the place of packing-thread, of which there was none in the nursery.

As Kenneth was much more quiet in his movements than James, he was intrusted with the parcels, and desired to take an opportunity of slipping them into Mr Stanley's greatcoat pocket.

"Do you know papa's coat?" said Clara.

"I should think I do," said Kenneth.

"Because if you go and put all these things into any other pocket," said Elizabeth, "I do not know what we shall do to you."

Kenneth accomplished his mission safely, and had only just returned when his mamma came into the nursery to desire her two youngest children to go to bed.

Mary, Elizabeth, and Clara went downstairs to the drawing-room for a few minutes; and when Mary and Elizabeth went to bed, Clara had a short conversa-

tion with her papa. She wished very much to be allowed to sit late, but that was not deemed advisable, so she at last retired to rest, giving Jessie strict injunctions to awake her early in the morning, that she might say good-bye to her papa.

From a pleasant dream of summer and green fields, unclouded by a single thought of separation, Clara awoke to the fact that it was a morning late in autumn, dark and stormy, with the wind howling in the chimney, and the rain beating on the windows, and that her papa was going away. The tears sprang to her eyes, and a heavy feeling of sorrow filled her heart; but she had no time to indulge grief; for Jessie, who was standing over her with a lighted candle, said, "You must make haste, Miss Clara, Margaret is just going to get your papa's breakfast." Never did any little fingers move more quickly than Clara's did that morning; and by the time her papa had reached the dining-room, she was ready to join him. Her voice was very tremulous, and her eyes were glistening with the tears that filled them almost to

overflowing, but she commanded herself so far as to talk somewhat cheerfully to her papa, and even to smile at some of the mistakes she made in her hurry to help him. The grey light of morning was every moment increasing in clearness. Before Mr Stanley had finished breakfast, Mr Melville came down-stairs. In a short time Mr Stanley began to look at his watch, as the hour for leaving the manse drew near, and Clara's heart beat fast as she heard the dog-cart driven round from the stables. There was no time to say much ; so, with one embrace, and a whispered prayer, that God would bless his little girl, Mr Stanley drove off with Mr Melville to meet the morning coach. Clara returned to the dining-room, and burying her head in one of the sofa cushions, indulged her grief for some time without restraint. Margaret, however, soon came to finish arranging the dining-room for the day, and Clara could not remain on the sofa. She therefore went up-stairs, and found that Mary and Elizabeth were dressed. The dark, early morning dulness of the house gave place to the

bright, cheerful activity of the day, and Clara's grief gradually passed away, till in a week or two it was a thing of the past. Not many days passed before she received a long and extremely interesting letter from her papa, narrating various things that happened to him during his journey, and also how he first became cognisant of the fact that some kind little fairies had put good things in his pockets, and what a surprise it was.

Winter passed on at Inverallan, and Christmas again brought Mr Stanley for a few days to the manse. In the month of January there was a beautiful snow-storm, in which Donald performed wonders in the sledge, with a little hand-bell attached to the collar of his very primitive harness. It afforded great delight to the younger children to imagine themselves a company of Laplanders; and, indeed, James strenuously asserted that no reindeer could possibly run faster than Donald. Every week, every day at Inverallan brought new pleasures, for, where children fear God, they must be happy; and if our young friends who may happen to read our account of Clara's visit

to Inverallan, will seek first to please God, they will find that they are really securing their own happiness, for "wisdom's ways are indeed ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

THE END.

|

|

|

BOUND BY
EDMANT & EDMONDS
LONDON

